

Hangeul

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Hangeul / written by Lee Jiyoung : edited by the Center for International Affairs. — Seongnam : The Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2013

p. ; cm

ISBN 978-89-7105-965-4 03710 : Not for Sale

711.2—KDC5  
495.71—DDC21

CIP2013027129

**The Understanding Korea Series (UKS) ①**

## Hangeul

Published by The Academy of Korean Studies Press

Published in December 2013

Written by Lee, Ji-young

Edited by The Center for International Affairs

**Address** The Academy of Korean Studies Press

323 Haogae-ro, Bundang-gu, Seongnam-si, Gyeonggi-do, 463-791, Korea

**Tel** 82-31-708-5360 **Fax** 82-31-701-1343

**Website** [book.aks.ac.kr](http://book.aks.ac.kr)

**Email** [akspress@aks.ac.kr](mailto:akspress@aks.ac.kr)

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ISBN 978-89-7105-965-4-03710

Printed in Korea

**The Understanding Korea Series (UKS) 1**

# Hangeul



## FORWARD

Korea achieved extraordinary economic development today by overcoming historical crises and hardships with wisdom and intelligence. The foundation for such development is the result of South Korea's harmonious integration of various characteristics like traditional culture, social structure, emphasis on education and politics. Accordingly, widening the understanding on Korea by re-examining the engine of Korea's miraculous development including its rich cultural heritage and economic achievements and sharing the findings with the world is a timely requested task.

Since its establishment in 1978, the Academy of Korean Studies strived to develop and creatively preserve Korean culture. In doing so, the Academy of Korean Studies not only published many academic books specialized in Korean studies but also provided overseas scholastic support and trained and produced Korean studies experts. Today, the Academy of Korean Studies faces a new opportunity to step forward in elevating the importance of Korean studies in the world on the occasion of the rise of the Korean wave and professionalism in the field.

In this regard, I am delighted to see the publication of *Hangeul*, the first book in the Understanding Korea Series.

I hope that this book will contribute to the deepening of the understanding on Korea and stimulate interest in creativity and authenticity of Korean culture. Finally, I would like to thank the Director of the Center for International Affairs and others who made this publication possible.

December 2013  
Lee Bae Yong, Ph.D.  
President of the Academy of Korean Studies

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Center for International Affairs (CEFIA) at the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS) undertakes the task of promoting better understanding of Korea through development of materials on Korean history and culture as well as making sure that textbooks around the world are correctly presenting Korea. In doing so, I learned that it is hard for foreign students to understand Korea correctly due to too many incorrect contents or too little contents in various foreign textbooks.

This book is the first book in the Understanding Korea Series (UKS) covering the Korea's distinctive writing system, Korea's world-class cultural heritage. UKS aims at publishing books on Korea that go beyond being simply a popular guide to Korea and provide in-depth understandings on Korea from academic approaches. The UKS books will academically deal with various concrete topics related to Korean history and culture in general but written with general readers in mind.

The book starts with how Hangeul, Korea's distinctive writing system is different from those of its neighboring countries, China and Japan. It then discusses in a simple manner the creation of Hunminjeongeum and changes over the time to present day in detail. Although this book is written to broaden the understanding on Korean culture, the book is written from

a linguistic perspective making a valuable reference to students of Korean studies and Korean language.

Many whom I cannot name here have helped in the publication of this book. I am grateful to them. I would like to thank Prof. Lee Jiyoung the author and Graphic Designer Ahn Sang-soo, Jangseogak at the Academy of Korean Studies, Korea University Library, National Assembly Library of Korea, MiraeN, Sogang University Loyola Library, Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University, Andong National University Museum, Cheongju National Museum, Hangeul Museum (Mido Museum), Gyeonggi Provincial Museum, Woljeongsa Museum, Yonhap News, and Mr. Seo Jae-sik for generously permitting the use of photos. Lastly, I give thanks to Prof. Christian J. Park for translating and Dr. Greg Sharzer for editing the manuscript.

I sincerely hope that this book will contribute to the better understanding of Korean culture and the raising of the international community's interest in Korea.

December 2013

Yang Young-Kyun, Ph.D.

Director of the Center for International Affairs



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## 1. KOREAN LANGUAGE AND HANGEUL IN EAST ASIA

There are three countries in East Asia: Korea (South Korea and North Korea), China and Japan. Historically, these three neighboring countries have maintained an extremely close relationship, and that intimacy extends to the present, encompassing politics, economics and culture.



〈Figure 1〉 Korea, China, and Japan (by Google Map)

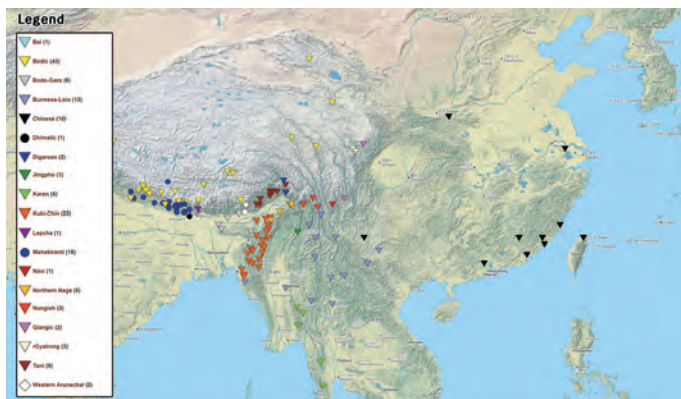
However, each one of these three countries possesses distinctive, native language and writing systems. The official spoken languages for Korea, China and Japan are Korean, Mandarin and Japanese, respectively.<sup>1</sup> As described in <Table 1>, these three languages belong to different linguistic families and genres and use different alphabets.<sup>2</sup> <Figure 2>, <Figure 3-1>, <Figure 3-2>, and <Figure 4> attest to this fact.

Country	Language	Family/Genus	Writing System
Korea	Korean language	Korean/Korean	Hangeul
China	Mandarin	Sino-Tibetan/Chinese	Hanzi
Japan	Japanese language	Japanese/Japanese	Hiragana, Katakana

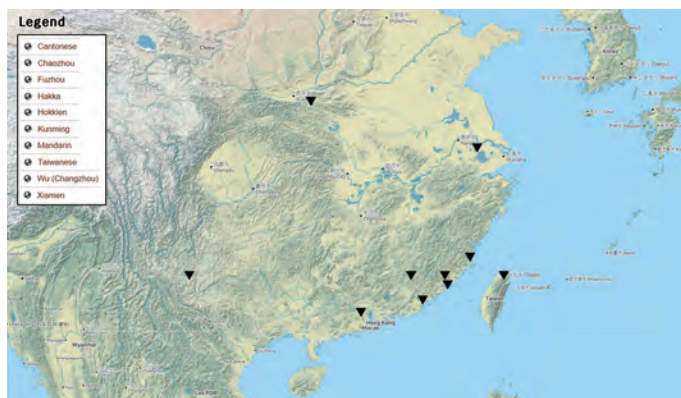
<Table 1> Languages and Writing Systems of Korea, China and Japan



<Figure 2> Korean Family (by WALS online)



〈Figure 3-1〉 Sino-Tibetan Family (by WALS online)

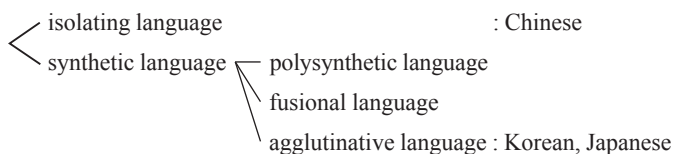


〈Figure 3-2〉 Mandarin Family (by WALS online)



〈Figure 4〉 Japanese Family (by WALS online)

Comparing language characteristics,<sup>3</sup> Korean is similar to Japanese but considerably different from Chinese. From a morphological point of view, these languages are categorized as follows: Korean and Japanese are agglutinative languages, since most of the words are created by combining morphemes, whereas Chinese is an isolating language, in which each word is composed of a single morpheme.



Korean and Japanese have a subject-object-verb (SOV) word order while Chinese uses a subject-verb-object (SVO) word order. However, Korean lacks a tone system, while Chinese has a complex tone system, and the Japanese system is simpler than Chinese.

The most prominent differences among Korean, Chinese and Japanese appear in their writing systems. As indicated in <Table 1>, Korea uses Hangeul, China uses Hanzi, and Japan uses Hiragana/Katakana. A writing system can be classified as segmental, logographic or syllabic, according to certain features of each system's alphabets. In the segmental writing systems, each character represents a phoneme, either a consonant or a vowel. In the logographic writing systems, each character represents either a word or morpheme. In the syllabic writing systems, each character refers to a syllable. According to these criteria, Korea's Hangeul is a segmental writing system, China's Hanzi is logographic and Japan's Hiragana/Katakana is syllabic.<sup>4</sup>

For example, a single syllable [ta] consists of an English consonant [t] and vowel [a] and can be transcribed as follows.

Hangeul	타[ta]
Hanzi	它[tā], 她[tā]
Hiragana/Katakana	た/タ[ta]

The consonant [t] and vowel [a] are transcribed using two different characters ‘ㄷ’ and ‘ㅏ’ in Hangeul. In Hanzi, [tā] can be transcribed as ‘它’ or ‘她’. Both are separate words with this usage. One single syllable [ta], which consists of the consonant [t] and vowel [a], can be transcribed using one character ‘た/タ’ in Hiragana/Katakana.

Although Korea, China and Japan have different native languages and writing systems, they share one thing in common: Hanzi or Chinese Characters. This is because these three countries share the common cultural background of Hanzi. As is widely known, Hanzi is one of the oldest written characters in the world. Historically, Korea and Japan cultivated their own linguistic cultures under the influence of Hanzi. Korea and Japan accepted it as a symbol and used it as an independent phonetic with an inherent sound. In addition, they sometimes use different forms of Hanzi for a word with the same definition. There are also differences in the adaptation of the changed form of Hanzi. The simplified version of traditional Hanzi is used in China, whereas the traditional form is still used in Korea. Japan uses the traditional form in most cases but sometimes the simplified version instead.

The form of Chinese Hanzi currently used in Korea is called Hanja, while in Japan it is called Kanji. Hanja is



used with the native Korean writing system, Hangeul, but its usage is limited to Sino-Korean derived vocabulary only. During the past several decades, denoting the latter vocabularies in Hangeul instead of Hanja became customary in Korea. The situation is somewhat different in Japan. Kanji is used with its native writing system, Hiragana/Katakana. Kanji and Hiragana/Katakana are still used concurrently in writing, unlike Korea where Hanja is rarely used in writing. Nevertheless, the pronunciation of Hanzi in Japanese is different from Mandarin.

Therefore, the Chinese character exists as a common symbol used in Korea, China and Japan, but it is not the current official writing system of Korea and Japan, and there are different degrees of importance of Hanzi within the writing systems of Korea and Japan.

Here are some examples of concrete words and sentences constructed with those words.

English	Korean		Chinese		Japanese	
	Transcription	Pronunciation	Transcription	Pronunciation	Transcription	Pronunciation
Hanzi	한자/漢字	[handʒa]	汉字	[Hânzi]	かんじ /漢字	[kanzi]
diary	일기/日記	[ilgi]	日记	[riji]	につき /日記	[nitki]
name card	명함/名銜	[myŏŋham]	名片	[míngpiàn]	めいし /名刺	[meisi]
doctor	의사/醫師	[iysa]	医生	[yīshēng]	いしや /医者	[isha]

〈Table 2〉 Comparison of Hanzi in Korea, China and Japan

As the following examples show, the words introduced in 〈Table 2〉 can be used in practical sentences. (a) is generally used in Korea and, in recent years, it has become extremely rare to find Hanja mid-sentence as shown in (b). (b) can only be written or understood by the highly-educated older generation; the younger generation finds it harder and harder to understand or write Hanja.

[Hanzi] I can write Hanzi.

- Korean: a. 나는 한자를 쓸 수 있다. b. 나는 漢字를 쓸 수 있다.

- Chinese: 我可以写汉字。

- Japanese: 私は漢字を書くことができる。

[diary] In the evening, I write my diary.

- Korean: a. 나는 저녁에 일기를 쓴다. b. 나는 저녁에 日記를 쓴다.

- Chinese: 在晚上, 我把一本日记。

- Japanese: 私は夕方に日記を書く。

[name card] I received his name card.

- Korean: a. 나는 그의 명함을 받았다. b. 나는 그의 名銜을 받았다.

- Chinese: 我得到了他的名片。

- Japanese: 私は彼の名刺をもらった。

[doctor] He became a doctor.

- Korean: a. 그는 의사가 되었다. b. 그는 醫師가 되었다.

- Chinese: 他成为一名医生。

- Japanese: 彼は医者になった。

## APPENDIX

### Korean and the Altaic Family

Along with Japanese, Korean is known as part of the Altaic Family; however, this classification is disputed. While there is a minor issue over whether Korean and Japanese belong to the Altaic Family or not, a bigger controversy exists regarding the Altaic Family itself. A recent typology research suggests that Korean is not a part of the Altaic Family.

According to WALS, there are 65 languages in the Altaic Family. These are divided into three genera: Mongolic (13 languages), Tungusic (11 languages) and Turkic (41 languages).



<Distribution of the Altaic Family (by WALS online)>

This figure illustrates that Korean does not belong to the Altaic Family. WALS suggests there is only one language, Korean, belonging to the Korean Family and the Korean Genus. This may be a testament to how difficult it is to identify the genealogy of Korean. Relatedly, Ethnologue: Languages of the World classifies Korean as a language isolate.



## 2. TRANSCRIPTION OF KOREAN USING CHINESE CHARACTERS

The major influx of Chinese characters into Korea began around 108 BC. Until the invention of Hunminjeongeum, Korea had to use Chinese characters to transcribe Korean, since no native writing system existed. This system of using Chinese character's sound and meaning to transcribe Korean is referred to as chajapyogi (借字表記; literally “borrowing Chinese characters transcription”).

Take the noun phrase ‘去隱春’ (interpreted as “past spring”) for an example to understand how Chinese characters had been used in the chajapyogi system:

Chinese characters:	去	隱	春
Sound/meaning:	[kə]/“to pass”	[in]/“to hide”	[chun]/“spring”
	↓	↓	↓
Borrowing:	“to pass”	[in]	“spring”
	↓	↓	↓
Korean:	[ka]	[in]	[pom]
	pass.V	REL	spring.N

The chajapyogi system was used for transcription of words and sentences of Korean. Transcriptions of words with borrowed characters are found in nouns, especially proper nouns such as names of places, persons, and titles. Transcription of sentences with borrowed characters is classified into three types: Hyangchal, Idu, and Gugyeol. But they have three differences.

First, unlike Hyangchal and Idu that use the original form of Chinese characters, Gugyeol sometimes borrowed fragments of Chinese characters for transcriptions. For example, a Gugyeol character ‘ㄷ’ was used as a genitive marker. The presumed original character of it is a Chinese character ‘叱’. A Gugyeol character ‘ㅇ’ was used as a stem of verb “do”, and its presumed original character is a Chinese character ‘爲’. Secondly, Hyangchal and Idu were used for transcription of lexical elements and grammatical elements. But Gugyeol were used for transcription was used for transcription of grammatical elements only. This difference appeared because Gugyeol was the method designed for helping interpret the Chinese text. So unlike Hyangchal and Idu, Gugyeol left the original Chinese text intact, and added characters corresponding to grammatical elements of Korean. Lastly, Hyangchal, Idu, and Gugyeol were found in different kinds of texts. Hyangchal was found in Hyangga, the vernacular poetries



of the Shilla period (57 BC~935AD); Idu was mainly used for technical writings; Gugyeol was found in primarily in Buddhist scriptures of the Goryeo period (918~1392).

Hyangchal, Idu, and Gugyeol were highly systematic methods of transcription, and had been used for a long time. But they had inherent disadvantage, namely using Chinese characters. A lot of Koreans, except for the upper class, could not read and write Chinese characters, so they had difficulty in understanding books and documents written by the chajapyogi system, as well as Chinese characters. Hence, the invention of Hunminjeongeum was a triumph for the Korean people.



### 3. THE CREATION OF HUNMINJEONGEUM

#### 3.1 King Sejong and Hunminjeongeum

King Sejong (r. 1418~1450) was the fourth king of Joseon (1392~1897).<sup>5</sup> It was during King Sejong's reign when Joseon's state foundation in all areas, such as politics, economics and social and cultural life, were firmly established. His contribution to cultural development was especially remarkable.

The most noteworthy cultural advancement achieved during King Sejong's reign is the creation of Korean letters, Hunminjeongeum (Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People). As a benevolent king, he was not only fond of literature but had a keen interest in ordinary people's lives. King Sejong always wanted to enlighten his people; an incident that illustrates this desire is indicated in a record written on lunar November 7, 1432 (Sejong 14) of *Sejongsillok* (the Veritable Records of King Sejong).

Even an erudite person can judge the weight of transgression



〈Figure 5〉 Royal Portrait of King Sejong

only after he reviews the law. If so, then how can ignorant people realize the weight of their own transgression and correct themselves? It is impossible to teach all laws to the people. However, why not write down a selective list of major crimes, translate them into Idu and proclaim them to people so these unlearned men and women can realize ways to avoid committing crimes?

The law books of the day were useless to people who were unable to read or write Chinese characters. That is the reason why he commanded the books to be translated into Idu scripts for the people to understand. This reveals King Sejong's concern for the importance of making his subjects aware of what constitutes a crime in order to eliminate it.

However, Idu also was a *chajapyogi* transcription system based on Chinese characters and could only transcribe a few lexical or grammatical words. Consequently, it could not notate Korean completely. There is no doubt that Idu was one of the easiest transcription methods in use at the time but it still had this inherent limitation. The desperate need for script that the people could easily learn and use was King Sejong's motivation behind the invention of *Hunminjeongeum*. This intention is revealed in his written preamble to

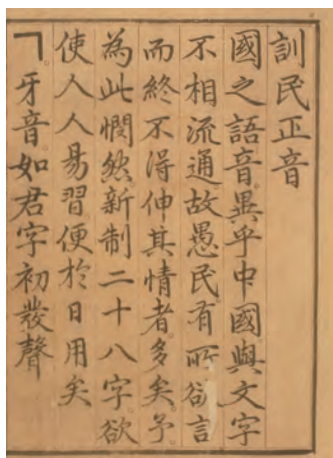
*Hunminjeongeum haerye* (訓民正音 解例, Explanation and Examples of the Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People), published after its creation in 1446.

Because the speech of this country is different from that of China, it does not match Chinese characters. As a result, even if the unlearned want to communicate, many of them cannot state their concerns in the end. I felt pity for them and created 28 letters anew. It is my wish that all the people may easily learn and conveniently use them daily.<sup>6</sup>

The first reference to the creation of Hunminjeongeum is found in Volume 102 of *Sejongsillok* within a record on Lunar December 30, 1443 (Sejong 25).<sup>7</sup>

This month the King created 28 letters of eonmun (the Vernacular Script) personally. The letters were modeled after the shape of the Old Seal Script, and divided into three groups: initial, medial, and terminal sounds. A syllable can be formed only after these letters are combined. Even though they are simple, both Chinese and Korean can be transcribed using these letters, and there are infinite ways of conversion so it is named Hunminjeongeum.

In 1446, *Hunminjeongeum haerye* was published to explain the letters of Huminjeongeum, and it came to be used as the native Korean alphabet. Many books written



〈Figure 6〉 Hunminjeongeum haerye and  
Hunminjeongeum eonhae

in Hunminjeongeum have been published ever since and, as King Sejong wished, not only the people of Joseon but also their descendants in present day Korea use the letters he created. This allows them to easily transcribe their spoken Korean language.



## APPENDIX

### **King Sejong and Jiphyeonjeon (The Academy of Worthies)**

Jiphyeonjeon must be mentioned whenever one discusses the creation of Hunminjeongeum by King Sejong. Jiphyeonjeon was a scholarly research institute established inside the palace in the Early Joseon period, in 1420 (the second year of Sejong's reign). Since the purpose of this institute was to cultivate scholars and to promote scholarly endeavors, numerous outstanding scholars of the day became its members and produced many academic achievements. The scholars engaged in innumerable academic discussions in diverse areas with King Sejong; therefore, some consider that they made key contributions to the invention of Hunminjeongeum. Indeed, the preface of *Hunminjeongeum haerye*, written by Jeong Inji, recorded that the Jiphyeonjeon scholars such as Jeong Inji, Choe Hang, Bak Paengnyeon, Sin Sukju, Seong Sammun, Gang Huian, Yi Gae, and Yi Seonro wrote the explanations and examples on King Sejong's command.

In the winter of the year of rooster, our king invented 28 letters of Jeongeum (proper sounds), showed a few simple examples and named them Hunminjeongeum.

... At last, (King Sejong) commanded me to add more detailed explanations and to teach the people. According to the command, I [Jeong Inji] ... along with Choe Hang, ... Bak Paengnyeon, ... Sin Sukju, ... Seong Sammun, ... Gang Huian, ... Yi Gae,... and Yi Seonro have humbly crafted numerous examples and explanations to write an abridgement.

### 3.2 The Design Principles of Hunminjeongeum Letters

Hunminjeongeum consists of 28 letters in total, 17 consonants and 11 vowels. The design principle of these letters can be examined in Jejahae section of *Hunminjeongeum haerye*. *Hunminjeongeum haerye* is divided into two major sections. The first section is commonly called Yeuipyeon (例義篇, Section of Examples and Definitions) and includes the preface by King Sejong, the phonetics of letters and the order usage. The second section is Haeryepyeon (解例篇, Section of Explanations and Examples). This section includes Jejahae (制字解, the Explanation of Letter Design), Choseonghae (初聲解, Explanation of Initial Sounds), Jungseonghae (中聲解, Explanation of Medial Sounds), and Jongseonghae (終聲解, Explanation of Terminal Sounds). It also includes Hapjahae (合字解, Explanation on Combining Methods of the Letters), Yongjarye (用字例, Examples of Word Usage), and the preface by Jeong Inji.

The content of Yeuipyeon is widely known since it has been identically recorded in both *Sejongsillok* and Volume 1 of *Worinseokbo*. But the content of *Hunminjeongeum haerye*, particularly the letter design principle, was unknown until a copy of this book was discovered in 1940. Prior to this, there various hypotheses regarding the letter design principle. However, since the book's discovery,

the letter design principle explained in *Hunminjeongeum haerye* has become the orthodox theory. Accordingly, the letter design principle explained in the Jejaha section of *Hunminjeongeum haerye* will be elaborated here.

The design principle of the basic letters of consonant and vowel is hieroglyphic. Hieroglyph means “to imitate shapes.” The basic consonant letters are modeled after the features of articulatory organs when they make sounds. The basic vowel letters are based on the shapes of Samjae (Three Powers), namely: Heaven, Earth, and Man.

The basic consonant letters are ㄱ[k], ㄴ[n], ㅁ[m], ㅅ[s], and ㅇ[h]. All five letters depict shapes of articulatory organs take when making these sounds. That is the reason why Jejaha section of *Hunminjeongeum haerye* has divided sounds according to the places of articulation: molars, linguals, labials, incisors, and laryngeals. The explanations given in the Jejaha are as follows:<sup>8</sup>

The molar sound ㄱ depicts the outline of the root of the tongue blocking the throat.

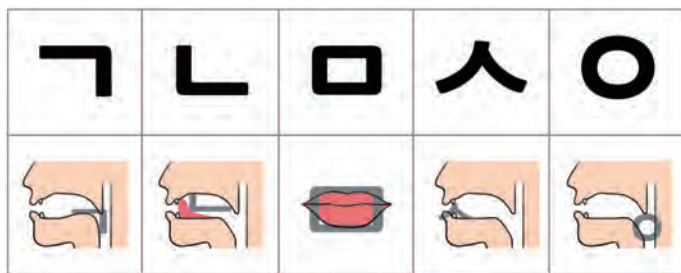
The lingual sound ㄴ depicts the outline of the tongue touching the alveolar ridge.

The labials sound ㅁ depicts the outline of the mouth.

The incisor sound ㅅ depicts the outline of the incisor.

The laryngeal sound ㅇ depicts the outline of the throat.

The shapes and gestures of articulatory organs used in the pronunciation of these consonants are illustrated in 〈Figure 7〉, below:



〈Figure 7〉 The Shapes and Gestures of Articulatory Organs Used in the Pronunciation of Consonants

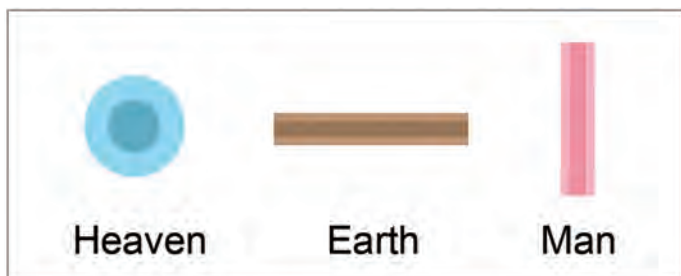
The basic vowel letters are ㆍ [ʌ], — [ɪ], and ㅣ [i]. These three letters were modeled after shapes of Samjae (Three Powers), namely, Heaven, Earth, and Man. The explanations given in the Jejahae are as follows:<sup>9</sup>

With ㆍ, the roundness of the outline is a depiction of Heaven.

With —, the flatness of the outline is a depiction of Earth.

With ㅣ, the uprightness of the outline is a depiction of Man.

The hieroglyphics of vowels are illustrated in 〈Figure 8〉, below:



〈Figure 8〉 The Hieroglyphics of Vowels

The remaining letters were derived from basic letters. The process of deriving different consonants from the basic consonants is adding strokes in accordance with the sound. The five principal consonants ㄱ, ㄴ, ㅁ, ㄷ, and ㄹ represent the weakest sounds within each specific homorganic group. Consequently, adding strokes to these letters means the sound is becoming more severe. According to this principle of adding strokes, nine consonants belonging to the same homorganic groups, with more severe sounds, were derived from the basic consonants.

	Basic		1 <sup>st</sup> stroke		2 <sup>nd</sup> stroke
	weak		→		more severe
Molars	ㄱ[k]	→	ㅋ[k <sup>h</sup> ]		
Linguals	ㄴ[n]	→	ㄷ[t]	→	ㅌ[t <sup>h</sup> ]

Labials	ㅁ[m]	→	ㅂ[p]	→	ㅃ[p <sup>h</sup> ]
Incisors	ㄴ[s]	→	ㄷ[ts]	→	ㄸ[ts <sup>h</sup> ]
Laryngelas	ㅇ[h]	→	ㅎ[ʔ]	→	ㅎ[h]

Besides, there are three letters of which form is altered: molar sound ㅇ[ŋ], semi-lingual sound ㄹ[l], and semi-incisor sound ㄷ[z]. These letters are also derived from basic letters by adding strokes, but the addition of strokes does not make them more severe.

Like the consonants, eight different vowel letters were derived from the basic ones, ㅏ, ㅑ, ㅓ, and ㅕ. They are complex symbols, created by combining two different letters, in two stages. The first stage is deriving ㅗ [o], ㅛ [a], ㅜ [u], and ㅠ [ə] from ㅏ, ㅑ, and ㅓ. In the second stage, ㅟ [yo], ㅠ [ya], ㅠ [yu], ㅡ [yə] are created by adding one more dot ㅛ to ㅗ, ㅛ, ㅜ, ㅠ.

#### The first stage

ㅏ + ㅑ → ㅗ  
 ㅏ + ㅓ → ㅛ  
 ㅑ + ㅓ → ㅜ  
 ㅑ + ㅕ → ㅠ

#### The second stage

ㅏ + ㅗ → ㅟ  
 ㅑ + ㅛ → ㅠ  
 ㅓ + ㅜ → ㅠ  
 ㅕ + ㅠ → ㅡ

## APPENDIX 1

### Various Hypotheses on the Creation of Hunminjeongeum






There had been several hypotheses regarding the invention of Hunminjeongeum, particularly on the shapes of its letters until the discovery of *Hunminjeongeum haerye* explaining its letter design principle and method. Its origins variously included imitating an ancient script, the Old seal script, Sanskrit, the Phags-pa script, and even inspiration by Korean traditional window lattice. The most durable hypothesis among them insisted Hunminjeongeum's relevance to the Phags-pa script.

Phags-pa script was the Mongol Empire's official script created by a monk named Phags-pa, commissioned by the Yuan Dynasty's Kublai Khan. Since its promulgation in 1269, it had been used in the official documents of the Yuan Dynasty, but it died out with the latter's demise. This script was phonetic, based on the Tibetan and modified to fit Mongolian.

The hypothesis regarding the connection between the Phags-pa script and Hunminjeongeum stemmed from the similarities found in the shape of few characters of the two scripts. This was originally claimed by Yi Ik (1681~1763), a Silhak philosopher, in his book *Seongho saseol* and



was reasserted by Gari K. Ledyard in 1966. Based on the statement “the letters [of Hunminjeongeum] were created after the Old Seal Script,” Ledyard argued that the Old Seal Script here referred to the Mongol seal script, namely the Phags-pa script. He cross-compared Phags-pa and Hunminjeongeum as shown in the table below, and claimed that the basic consonants of Hunminjeongeum were ㄱ, ㄷ, ㅂ, ㅅ, and ㄹ.

Phags-pa script	Letter shape					
	Phonetic	[k]	[t]	[p]	[s]	[l]
Hunminjeongeum	Letter shape	ㄱ	ㄷ	ㅂ	ㅅ	ㄹ
	Phonetic	[k]	[t]	[p]	[ts]	[l]

〈Comparing Phags-pa script and Hunminjeongeum Letter Shapes〉

There are a few problems with this claim. Among the 38 Phags-pa scripts and 28 characters of Hunminjeongeum, he made comparisons only with those indicated in this table. Furthermore, he argued that the basic consonants were ㄱ, ㄷ, ㅂ, ㅅ, and ㄹ, but *Hunminjeongeum haerye* explains that the basic consonants of Hunminjeongeum are ㄱ, ㄴ, ㄷ,

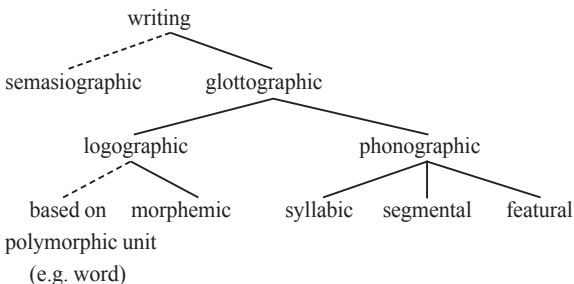
入, and ○.

These hypotheses assert Hunminjeongeum's similarity to various scripts that existed in East Asia at the time of the writing system's invention. When *Hunminjeongeum haerye* was not available as a reference, these hypotheses were formed based upon the phrase, "the letters [of Hunminjeongeum] were created after the Old Seal Script," which appears in a few records. After the discovery of *Hunminjeongeum haerye*, which clearly explains the letter design principle of Hunminjeongeum, however, all of these hypotheses were no longer convincing.

## APPENDIX 2

### Special Features of the Korean Alphabet (called Hunminjeongeum or Hangeul)

Many scholars noticed that the graphic structure of Hunminjeongeum is unique. For example, Chao (1968: 107) described the Korean alphabet as follows: “from the point of view of the design of symbols, [the phonetic symbols in the Korean alphabet] is a writing system in which parts of unit symbols represent analytically features of the sounds.” Sampson (1985) also noticed the fact that forms of the Korean alphabet reflect the phonetical differences. He classified the writing systems of the world in his book, and displayed a classification scheme as follows:



〈Sampson's Classification of Writing System (Sampson 1985: 32)〉

In this classification, he established new category, called “featural writing,” to which is only the Korean alphabet system belongs. Chapter 7 of his book is about the featural system and is purely devoted to the introduction of Korean alphabet system.

### 3.3 The Phonological Features of the 28 Letters of Hunminjeongeum

The phonological features of 17 consonants and 11 vowels of Hunminjeongeum are explained in *Hunminjeongeum haerye*. This book explains that the consonants are classified into molars, linguals, labials, incisors, laryngeals according to the places of articulation, and depending on their phonetic features, they are divided into wholly clear, partly clear, wholly muddy, neither clear nor muddy. These explanations of classifying consonants by the places of articulation and phonetic features are identical to modern phonology. From the latter point of view, it can be assumed that molars represent velar, labials represent bilabial, laryngeals represent glottal, linguals represent apical, and incisors represent dental sound. Wholly clear is plain or voiceless, partly clear is aspirated, wholly muddy is reinforcement/glottalization/tensity,<sup>10</sup> and neither clear nor muddy is sonorant.

Additional explanation is required for wholly muddy. *Hunminjeongeum haerye* defined six characters ㄱ, ㄲ, ㅃ, ㅆ, ㅈ, and ㅊ as wholly muddy. These letters are geminates: doubling ㄱ, ㄲ, ㅃ, ㅆ, ㅈ, and ㅊ.<sup>11</sup> They were not included in the 17 initial consonants and were chiefly used in the artificial readings of Chinese characters at the time of the invention of Hunminjeongeum. On very rare

occasions, ㅍ and ㅍㅍ were used in Korean transcriptions. There are also examples of ㄱ, ㄷ and ㅈ being used in Korean transcriptions, but the usage was extremely uncommon and strictly limited to the medial position of words.

The following table arranges the 17 consonants of Hunminjeongeum according to the classification methods explained in *Hunminjeongeum haerye*.

	Molars	Linguals	Labials	Incisors	Laryngeals	Semi-lingual	Semi-incisor
Wholly clear	ㄱ[k]	ㄷ[t]	ㅂ[p]	ㅈ[ts] ㅅ[s]	ㅎ[ʔ]		
Partly clear	ㅋ[k <sup>h</sup> ]	ㅌ[t <sup>h</sup> ]	ㅍ[p <sup>h</sup> ]	ㅊ[ts <sup>h</sup> ]	ㅎ[h]		
Neither clear nor muddy	ㅇ[ŋ]	ㄴ[n]	ㅁ[m]		ㅇ[ɦ]	ㄹ[l]	ㄷ[ɹ]

〈Table 3〉 The Phonological Classification of 17 Consonants explained in *Hunminjeongeum haerye*

According to *Hunminjeongeum haerye*'s explanation, vowels are classified by four criteria. First, does the tongue retract or not? Second, is the sound deep or shallow? Third, is the mouth contracted or spread? Finally,

does it start with the vowel ㅣ [i]? The first and second criteria correspond to the basic vowels, ㅏ [ʌ], ㅓ [ɪ], and ㅗ [i].<sup>12</sup>

With ㅏ, the tongue retracts and pronunciation is deep.

With ㅓ, the tongue retracts a little and pronunciation is neither deep nor shallow.

With ㅗ, the tongue does not retract and pronunciation is shallow.

These can be inferred as vowel backness and vowel height, respectively, from the modern phonological point of view.

The second criterion explains ㅜ [o], ㅡ [a], ㅟ [u], and ㅝ [ə]. In modern phonology this may correspond to roundedness.

ㅜ is the same as ㅏ, only the mouth is contracted.

ㅡ is the same as ㅓ, only the mouth is spread.

ㅟ is the same as ㅓ, only the mouth is contracted.

ㅝ is the same as ㅓ, only the mouth is spread.

The third criterion explains ㅟ [yo], ㅠ [ya], ㅡ [yu], and ㅢ [yə]. In modern phonology, this may be inferred as the explanation for the features of diphthong.

ㅏ is the same as ㅑ, only it arises from ㅣ .

ㅓ is the same as ㅕ, only it arises from ㅣ .

ㅗ is the same as ㅛ, only it arises from ㅣ .

ㅛ is the same as ㅝ, only it arises from ㅣ .

The following Table arranges the 11 vowels of Hunminjeongeum after the classification methods explained in *Hunminjeongeum haerye*.

	Don't Retract	Retract A Little		Retract	
	Spread	Spread	Contracted	Spread	Contracted
Deep				ㅏ [ʌ]	
				ㅓ [a]	ㅑ [o]
				ㅗ [ya]	ㅛ [yo]
Neither Deep Nor Shallow			ㅓ [i]		
			ㅕ [ə]	ㅗ [u]	
			ㅛ [ya]	ㅗ [yu]	
Shallow	ㅣ [i]				

〈Table 4〉 The Phonological Classification of 11 Vowels explained in *Hunminjeongeum haerye*



## APPENDIX

### The Philosophical Background of Hunminjeongeum

*Hunminjeongeum haerye* also explains the philosophical significance behind each of the 17 consonants and 11 vowels. This explanation is generally based on the Eastern philosophy. First, five sounds of consonants are explained in four ways: five elements, five seasons, five musical sounds, and five directions. This can be summarized as follows:

Five Sounds	Molars	Linguals	Labials	Incisor	Laryngeals
Five Elements	Tree	Fire	Soil	Metal	Water
Five Seasons	Spring	Summer	Last summer	Autumn	Winter
Five Musical Sounds	Gak	Chi	Gung	Sang	U
Five Directions	East	South	Center	West	North

The Yin-Yang philosophy is used to explain the vowels. ‘ㅡ’ is modeled after the Earth with the quality of ‘Yin’. Since ‘ㆍ’ is modeled after the Heaven which has the quality of ‘Yang’. For ㅏ, ㅓ, ㅗ, and ㅜ, ‘ㆍ’ is located at the bottom or inside: this means all of these vowels emerged from the earth, hence Yin. In case of ㅘ, ㅙ, ㅚ, and ㅛ, ‘ㅡ’ is placed on top and outside because these vowels emerged from the

Heaven, hence Yang. This can be summarized as follows:

Yin [陰]	ㅡ [ɨ]	ㅓ [u], ㅗ [o]	ㅜㅜ [yu], ㅟ [yo]
Yang [陽]	ㅏ [ʌ]	ㅛ [o], ㅓ [a]	ㅟㅟ [yo], ㅟ [ya]
Neural	ㅣ [i]		

Classifying vowels by Yin and Yang corresponds perfectly to the phenomenon of vowel harmony opposition: vowels with Yin quality go well with each other, and vowels with Yang quality go well together. This is one of the distinctive features of Korean vowels.

### 3.4 Letter Usage

*Hunminjeongeum haerye* defines three major guidelines for the actual usage of the 28 letters of Hunminjeongeum: 1) combining the letters; 2) terminal sounds; and 3) complex letters. *Hunminjeongeum haerye* explains the first guideline is as follows:<sup>13</sup>

The three sounds, the initial, the medial, and the terminal, combine to form the complete syllable. Some of the initial sounds stand above the medial sound; some stand to the left of the medial sound ... Among the medial sounds, the round one and the horizontal ones stand below the initial sounds; these are ㆍ [ʌ], ㅡ [ɪ], ㅜ [o], ㅓ [u], ㅠ [yo], ㅟ [yu]... The vertical ones stand at the right of the initial sound; these are ㅣ [i], ㅑ [a], ㅓ [ya], ㅕ [ə], and ㅗ [yə]... The terminal sounds stand below the initial and the medial.

As previously mentioned, Hunminjeongeum is a phonetic alphabet consisting of consonants and vowels. Generally, in a phonetic alphabet consonants and vowels are arranged linearly. However, even though Hunminjeongeum is a phonetic alphabet, it is used in syllabic blocks constructed with syllable onset, nuclei and codas. Using the letters in syllable blocks is a unique tradition still maintained today. Here are some examples:

A: 흥 | ㄴ | ㄱ | ㄹ | ㄴ | 흥 | ㄴ | ㄱ | ㄹ | ㄴ | 표 | ㄴ | 흥 | ㄴ | ㄴ | 로 | ㄱ | ㄴ | ㄴ | ㄴ | ㄴ |

The linear arrangement of vowels and consonants in example A is typical for phonetic alphabets. The Hangeul description system uses B.

Hunminjeongeum named consonants as initial sounds and vowels as medial sounds. In view of syllable structure, the initial sound corresponds to the syllable onset, and the medial sound, the syllable nuclei. However, separate consonants for syllable codas, the final element of the syllable, were not created. Phonologically speaking, the syllable coda is a consonant; therefore, the consonants created as syllable onset can be used as syllable codas instead of creating a separate set of consonants. This was possible because it was obvious that the possible change in the consonant, when placed in the onset and coda, is related to the allomorph, not the phoneme. Consequently,

all 17 consonants can be used as syllable codas in principle. This is what the first rule regarding guideline 2, ‘initial sounds are reused as terminal sounds’ means. This is still valid in the current Hangeul writing usage.

The second rule related to guideline 2, ‘only the eight letters of ㄱ, ㅎ, ㄷ, ㄴ, ㅁ, ㅂ, ㅅ, and ㅈ can be used as terminal sounds’ can be understood as realizing the phonological process in syllable-final consonants, or neutralization. In Korean, consonants in a syllable-final position are never released. So consonants lose the distinction among plain, tense, and aspirated in a syllable-final position. As the result, the rule indicates that the above eight consonants can represent syllable codas.

The third guideline about complex letters is also discussed in *Hunminjeongeum haerye*. Hunminjeongeum consists of 17 consonants and 11 vowels; however, open closer examination, letters other than these 28 are found in texts after its invention. These letters were created by combining the 28 letters of Hunminjeongeum in various methods.

There are two methods of consonant combination: Byeongseo (Horizontal Combination) and Yeonsoo (Vertical Combination). In Byeongseo, two or three consonants are written side-by-side to create a different letter. In Yeonsoo, two consonants are written stacked to

create a different letter.

Byeonseo is divided once again into Gakja Byeongseo (Horizontal Doubling Combination) and Hapyong Byeongseo (Horizontal Combination of Different Letters). Gakja Byeongseo uses the same letter repeatedly, and Hapyong Byeongseo uses different letters. The actual examples of these letters can be found in 15<sup>th</sup> century texts translated into Hangeul. Letters created using Gakja Byeongseo are ㄱᄇ, ㄴᄇ, ㅁᄇ, ㄷᄇ, ㄹᄇ, and ㅅᄇ. These belong to wholly muddy consonant category according to *Hunminjeongeum haerye*. As mentioned, these were infrequently used when transcribing Korean, and in most cases were used to transcribe Chinese characters' sounds. Letters created by Hapyong Byeongseo are ㅅᄇ, ㄴᄇ, ㅁᄇ, ㅅᄇ, ㅁᄇ, ㅅᄇ, ㅁᄇ, and ㅅᄇ. These were used to transcribe Korean consonant clusters or tense sounds in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Letters created by Yeonseo were ㅂᄇ, ㅍᄇ, ㅃᄇ, and ㅄᄇ. These were constructed by writing ‘ㅇ’ under labial ㅂ, ㅍ, ㅃ, and ㅄ. These are called light labial and mainly used to transcribe Chinese, especially the artificial readings of Chinese characters. However, ‘ㅂᄇ’[β] was used in Korean until the end of 15<sup>th</sup> century in Korean and then disappeared.

New vowel letters were created by combining the 11

letters. Only ㅏ, ㅑ, ㅓ, ㅕ, ㅗ, ㅛ, ㅜ, ㅠ, ㅡ, ㅣ, ㅈ, ㅊ, ㅋ, ㅌ, ㅍ, ㅍ, and ㅍ were used in transcription of Korean. ㅊ, ㅌ, ㅍ, ㅍ, ㅍ, and ㅍ were used to transcribe the artificial readings of Chinese characters and were almost never used to transcribe Korean.





## 4. CHANGES OF HANGEUL

### 4.1 Changes in the Name:

#### From Hunminjeongeum to Hangeul

When King Sejong first created the Korean alphabet system, its name was Hunminjeongeum. The meaning of it is described in the commentary section of the preface of Hunminjeongeum written by King Sejong in *Hunminjeongeum eonhae*:

Hunminjeongeum is the proper sound for the education of the people.

At around the same period, another name for the new script invented by King Sejong, Jeongeum (Proper Sounds), can be found, confirmed in Jeong Inji's preface included in *Hunminjeongeum haerye*. This can be found in the fourth entry of *Sejongsillok* Volume 113 recorded on Lunar September 29, 1446 as well:

In the winter of the Year of the Rooster [1443], our King created



〈Figure 9〉 Hunminjeoneum eonhae

28 letters, explained them with simple examples and meanings and named them Hunminjeongeum.

Jeongeum is presumed to be a contracted form of Hunminjeongeum, and the meaning can be found in the preface of *Seokbosangjeol* at the beginning of Chapter One of *Worin seokbo*.

Jeongeum means proper sound, since this script transcribes our language correctly and exactly, it is called Jeongeum.

Besides Hunminjeongeum and Jeongeum, King Sejong's new script was called Eonmun (Vernacular Script). Eonmun is often misunderstood as a derogatory term for Hunminjeongeum created by King Sejong, but the following records in *Sejongsillok* prove otherwise:

This month the King created 28 Eonmun letters personally. (in *Sejongsillok* Volume 102, dated Lunar December 30, 1443)

Isn't this Eonmun for the convenience of the people? (in *Sejongsillok* Volume 103, dated Lunar December 30, 1444)

In the first example, the output created by King Sejong was called Eonmun. If Eonmun was a derogatory term



for Hunminjeongeum, it could not be used. The second example is the rebuttal of King Sejong to Choe Manri, who appealed against the usage of Hunmingeongeum after the king invented it. It also does not make sense that the king would use the term Eonmun to disparage his own invention. Therefore, Eonmun can simply be used to distinguish it from Classical Chinese.

In short, the official title given at the time of King Sejong's creation was Hunminjeongeum, and it was sometimes written as Jeongeum. Eonmun was not an official name and should be regarded as a type of colloquial expression, indicating the script itself was used as a counterpart to define Classical Chinese. However, later on Eonmun became the most popular term.

Toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Joseon's national identity grew as the country underwent its modernization process. The Joseon Dynasty carried out various reforms and modernized the country. A new term, Gukmun (national script), emerged at this time. Examples of this term's use are found in *Gojongsillok* (The Veritable Records of King Gojong).

For the General Exam, all subjects including Gukmun, Classical Chinese, Calligraphy, Mathematics, National Political Affairs, International Affairs, National Affairs and Foreign Relations will

be tested. (in *Gojongsillok* Volume 32, dated Lunar July 12, 1894)

Article 14: All Laws and Decrees are to be primarily written in Gukmun, and Classical Chinese translation can be added or Gukmun and Classical Chinese can be written together. (in *Gojongsillok* Volume 32, dated Lunar November 21, 1894)

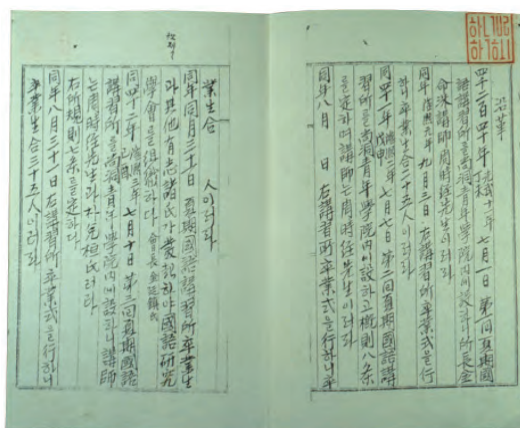
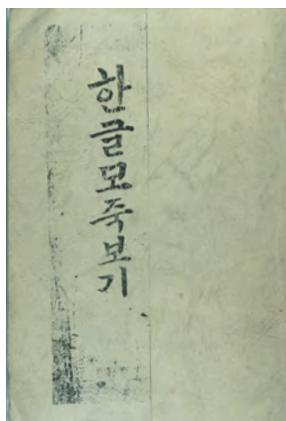
Gukmun can here be understood literally as “national script.” So this term implies Joseon’s pride as an independent country with a native script. But the term Gukmun did not survive long after that. With the demise of the Korean Empire in 1910 after Japan’s attack, the word ‘Guk’ (nation) came to represent ‘Japan’. Evidently, Gukeo (national language) and Gukmun also became representative of the Japanese language and Japanese scripts, not the Korean language and Korean scripts.

With this historical backdrop, a new name, ‘Hangeul’, surfaced. Hangeul is a word made up of two words, ‘Han’ meaning either “Great” or “One” and ‘geul’ meaning “writing.” Unlike the names used in past, Hunminjeongeum, Jeongeum, Eonmun, and Gukmun, which were all Sino-Korean word, Hangeul is purely native Korean words. Ju Sigyeong (1876~1914), the first known Korean linguist, and his students are credited for coining the term Hangeul. *Hangeulmo Jukbogi*, the

minutes of the foundation meeting of their research group, Joseon Eonmun Society, introduces the term Hangeul.

1:00 PM, March 13, 1913 ... the name of our group will be changed to ‘Hangeulmo’ (Hangeul Society)

After this, the term Hangeul gradually disseminated until the name of Korean native script became Hangeul.



〈Figure 11〉 Hangeulmo Jukbogi





nowadays. The phonetic for ‘ㅐ’ was [ɛ]. ‘ㅐ’ was mainly used to transcribe the artificial readings of Chinese characters, and rarely used in Korean transcription in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, it became obsolete after the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Besides the basic consonant letters, the complex initials also went through change. ㄱ, ㄲ, ㅋ, ㆁ, ㆁ, and ㆁ mainly transcribed the artificial readings of Chinese characters in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. But they have represented the tense sounds since the 20<sup>th</sup> century. ㆁ, ㆁ, ㆁ, ㆁ, ㆁ, and ㆁ gradually died out after the 17<sup>th</sup> century. ㆁ, ㆁ, ㆁ became obsolete since the 20<sup>th</sup> century. ㆁ was the only letter used in transcribing Korean among letters created by the Yeonseo method, yet it became obsolete after the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Accommodating the aforementioned consonant changes the contemporary Korean orthography designates ㄱ, ㄴ, ㄷ, ㄹ, ㅁ, ㅂ, ㅅ, ㅇ, ㅈ, ㅊ, ㅋ, ㆁ, and ㆁ as the 14 basic consonants, and ㄱ, ㄲ, ㅋ, ㆁ, and ㆁ as consonants representing tense sounds as below:

			Bilabial	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Obstruent	Plosive	Plain	ㅍ[p]	ㄷ[t]		ㄱ[k]	
		Aspirated	ㅍ[pʰ]	ㄷ[tʰ]		ㄱ[kʰ]	
		Tense	ㅍ[pʰ]	ㄷ[tʰ]		ㄱ[kʰ]	
	Fricative	Plain		ㅅ[s]			
		Aspirated					ㅎ[h]
		Tense		ㅅ[sʰ]			
	Affricate	Plain			ㅈ[tʃ]		
		Aspirated			ㅈ[tʃʰ]		
		Tense			ㅈ[tʃʰ]		
Sonorant	Nasal		ㅁ[m]	ㄴ[n]		ㅇ[ŋ]	
	Liquid			ㄹ[l]			

〈Table 5〉 Contemporary Korean Consonants

Hunminjeongeum has 11 basic vowels: ㅏ, ㅑ, ㅣ, ㅓ, ㅕ, ㅗ, ㅛ, ㅜ, ㅠ, and ㅡ. Among them, ‘ㅏ, ㅑ’ became obsolete in the contemporary Korean transcription. The contemporary Korean orthography designates the following 10 letters as basic vowels: ㅏ, ㅑ, ㅓ, ㅕ, ㅗ, ㅛ, ㅜ, ㅠ, ㅡ, and ㅣ. ‘ㅏ, ㅑ’ represented the [ʌ] sound in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. But after the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the sound [ʌ] started disappearing in the second syllable of the word or under the word and, from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, it began



the contemporary Korean. In the case of ㅖ, ㅟ, ㅢ, and ㅤ the sounds they represented in the 15<sup>th</sup> century are different from those today. Until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, ‘ㅖ, ㅟ’ were diphthongs representing [ay] and [əy], but after the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they transformed into monothongs, and they represent [ɛ] and [e] in the contemporary Korean. ㅖ and ㅟ are examples of letters that survived even though their phonetics have changed.

ㅢ and ㅤ were diphthongs and represented [oy] and [uy] until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but after the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they began to be pronounced as monothongs, [ö] and [ü]. Unlike ㅖ and ㅟ, in the contemporary Korean, ㅢ and ㅤ are not pronounced as complete monothongs in some cases. Depending on the area and generation using them or the phonological environment in which they appear, ㅢ and ㅤ are pronounced as either monothongs, [ö] and [ü] or diphthongs [we] and [wi]. Because of these, the Korean Pronunciation Standard Rules article 4 of the Standard Korean Regulations designated ㅏ, ㅓ, ㅕ, ㅗ, ㅛ, ㅜ, ㅠ, ㅡ, and ㅣ as monothongs yet added a provision that allows pronunciation of ㅢ and ㅤ as diphthongs.

Accommodating the aforementioned transformations in the vowels, the contemporary Korean orthography designates 10 vowels, ㅏ, ㅓ, ㅕ, ㅗ, ㅛ, ㅜ, ㅠ, ㅡ, and ㅣ as basic vowels, and further designates ㅖ, ㅟ, ㅢ, ㅤ,

ㅏ, ㅑ, ㅓ, ㅕ, ㅗ, ㅛ, ㅜ, and ㅠ as additional vowels. These vowels can be divided into monothongs and diphthongs according to their phonetics. The following table illustrates the contemporary Korean vowels according to their phonological features and the phonetic each represents.

	Front		Back	
	Unrounded	Rounded	Unrounded	Rounded
High	ㅣ [i]	ㅜ [ü]	ㅡ [i]	ㅓ [u]
Mid	ㅓ [e]	ㅕ [ö]	ㅗ [ə]	ㅛ [o]
Low	ㅗ [ɛ]		ㅓ [a]	

〈Table 6〉 The Monothong System of the Contemporary Korean

Rising	ㅑ [ya], ㅓ [yə], ㅕ[yo], ㅗ[yu] ㅗ [yɛ], ㅓ [ye]
	ㅓ[wa], ㅕ[wə], ㅕ[wɛ] ㅗ[we]
Falling	ㅓ[iy]

〈Table 7〉 The Diphthong System of the Contemporary Korean

## 5. HISTORY OF HANGEUL USAGE

### 5.1 Records Written in Hangeul

After the invention of Hunminjeongeum, otherwise known as Hangeul,<sup>14</sup> how has this brand-new script been used? One of the most common misconceptions about Hangeul is that it was shunned for a long time and only barely survived due to the efforts of a handful of people. This misunderstanding may have come from the view that Hangeul was rarely used in official records, and instead only used in letters and novels written by women.

Of course, Hangeul did not oust the influence of Chinese characters instantaneously as King Sejong intended as the 500-year records of Joseon showed. Even so, the claims that Hangeul was never used in official documents or was only used by women are not true. Hangeul, along with Chinese characters, proved to be an excellent writing method for government publications. Hangeul records are not only found in writings of common people but in the writings of the royal family, and writers were both men and women. Moreover, it is evident that

Hangeul was used in legally binding documents such as sales contracts or bestowal documents.

King Sejong claimed that he invented Hangeul so that the people could learn it easily and express their thoughts freely. Examining Hangeul usage since its creation, it is evident that Hangeul has been fulfilling its responsibility as a medium of communication among the people and between the government and the people. King Sejong's aspiration to promote communication among people with different ideologies and backgrounds, and the understanding, cooperation and social advancement that stems from such communication, has been fully realized.

After Hangeul was created in 1443, many books using it were published. Initially, the publications were mainly by government institutions like Eonmuncheong (the Vernacular Script Commission, also called Jeongeumcheong) or Gangyeongdogam (the General Directorate for the Publishing of Sutra). However, as time passed, not only the government but common people started using Hangeul in various books and documents. While every book written in Hangeul cannot be introduced here,<sup>15</sup> a few selected books and resources either written in Hangeul or translated into Hangeul will be introduced, so the general theme and trends of these works in specific periods can be comprehended. Observing the subjects



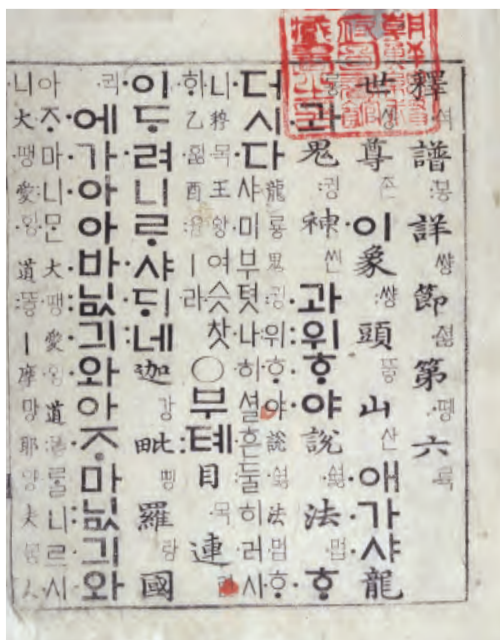
discussed in those books and resources and the authors of such publications promotes the understanding of Hangeul usage and context.

The first book in Hangeul was *Yongbieocheonga* (龍飛御天歌, The Song of the Dragons Flying Through Heaven). It was written in 1445 but published in 1447. This book praises the achievements of the ancestors of the Joseon Royal Family, emphasizes the fact that Joseon's present success is the result of those achievements and proclaims justifications for the founding of Joseon.

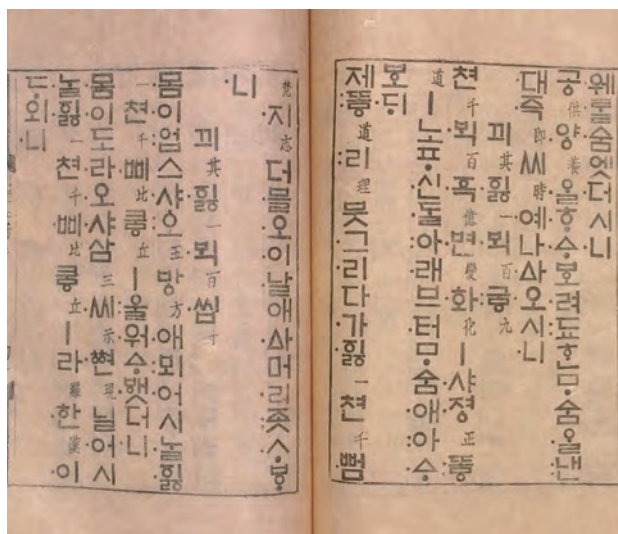
In 1477, *Seokbosangjeol* (釋譜詳節) and *Worincheongangjigok* (月印千江之曲) were published as well. Written by Suyangdaegun who later became King Sejo, the seventh king of Joseon, *Seokbosangjeol* documents the family tree and life of Buddha. This book was written to provide condolences for Soheonwanghu, King Sejong's queen, who died in 1446, and the book also encouraged the public to convert to Buddhism. *Worincheongangjigok* was written by King Sejong as poetry. It is said that King Sejong wrote it to praise Buddha's merits after Suyangdaegun presented *Seokbosangjeol*.

These three books were published in the same year (1447) but the transcription systems are different. All three books use a mixture of Chinese characters and





〈Figure 13〉 *Seokbosangjeol*



〈Figure 14〉 Worincheongangjigok

Hangeul. In *Yongbieoecheonga*, the Sino-Korean nouns were transcribed in Chinese characters, and Chinese phonetics were not added. In *Seokbosangjeol*, the Sino-Korean nouns were transcribed in Chinese characters, and Chinese phonetics were added in small Hangeul letters. *Worincheongangjigok* transcribed the phonetics of the Sino-Korean nouns in Hangeul and added Chinese characters below. Between these parallel methods of Hangeul and Chinese characters, *Seokbosangjeol*'s method became the most popular.

Many books were published in the 15<sup>th</sup> century beside these, mainly related to Buddhism. As for non-Buddhist books and resources, *Bunryudugongbusieonhae* (分類杜工部詩諺解, 1481), *Samganghaengsildo* (三綱行實圖, end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century), *Gugeupbangeonhae* (救急方諺解, 1466), and *Odaesan Sangwonsa Jungchang Gwonseonmun* (五臺山上院寺重創勸善文, 1464) will be covered here.

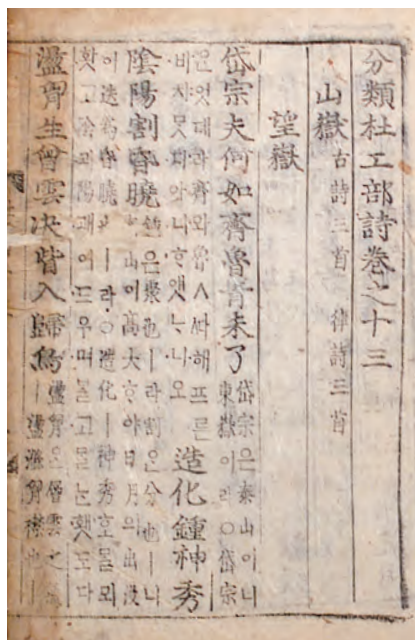
*Bunryudugongbusieonhae* is often called *Dusieonhae*. This book is a translation of a compilation of poems by a famous poet of the Tang Dynasty, Dù Fǔ. Dù Fǔ's poems were very popular during this period and critically acclaimed for their literary achievements. This Hangeul translation is of immense importance because by translating a literary genre, poetry, it showed Hangeul's diverse uses. From the fact that it was published again in

the 17<sup>th</sup> century, one may conclude that this book was read widely.

*Samganghaengsildo* is a compilation of worthy anecdotes about loyal subjects, filial sons and virtuous wives from Joseon and China. King Sejong said that it was good to spread the core teachings of Confucianism, loyalty, filial piety and virtue before handing out harsh punishments to people, and he commanded the publication of such a book for the people to read about them. The Chinese version of *Samganghaengsildo* was written in 1434 according to this command. Since the purpose of this book was education, it included drawings of the anecdotes so people could understand them at a glance, along with the explanations. It is estimated that the Chinese version of *Samganghaengsildo* was translated into Hangeul and published toward the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century during the reign of King Seongjong (r. 1469~1494).

*Gugeupbangeonhae* is a medical reference book with first-aid techniques for various diseases and injuries. The contents of other publications of the day were usually Buddhist doctrines, the virtues and morals of Confucianism or high literature, but this book contained medical knowledge that the general public could use in everyday life. This feature makes this book noteworthy.

The majority of the books written in Hangeul in the



〈Figure 15〉 Bunryudugongbusieonhae

80



15<sup>th</sup> century were published in xylography. Therefore *Odaesan Sangwonsa Jungchang Gwonseonmun* is special, since it is a handwritten historical manuscript. It is a copy of the documents written to raise offerings for the rebuilding of the Sangwonsa Temple located in Odaesan Mountain in Gangwon-do to heal the illness of King Sejo (r. 1455~1468), Joseon's seventh king, and of the document King Sejo wrote when he sent materials to help rebuild Sangwonsa.

As the 16<sup>th</sup> century dawned, the topics of the books translated into Hangeul become more diversified. First of all, the classic books of Confucianism, such as *Sohak* (小學, the Lesser Learning), *Saseo* (四書, the Four Books) and *Samgyeong* (三經, the Three Classics) were all translated into Hangeul: *Beonyeoksohak* (翻譯小學, the Translated Lesser Learning) was published in 1518; *Noneoeonhae* (論語諺解, the Translated Confucian Analects), *Maengjaeonhae* (孟子諺解, the Translated Mencius), *Jungyongeonhae* (中庸諺解, the Translated Doctrine of the Mean) and *Daehakeonhae* (大學諺解, the Translated Great Learning) were published toward the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century; *Sigyeongeonhae* (詩經諺解, the Translated Classic of Poetry), *Seogyongeonhae* (書經諺解, the Translated Book of Documents), *Juyeokeonhae* (周易諺解, the Translated Rites of Zhou) were translated at the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century



and published between the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Besides these, there were books on Buddhism, education for learning basic Chinese characters and conversation, medical treatments for fever, and veterinary medicine. *Beonyekbaktongsa* (翻譯朴通事, the Translated Baktongsa, circa, 1510), *Hunmongjahoe* (訓蒙字會, the Teaching Materials for Mastering Chinese Characters for Children, 1527), *Wumayangjeoyeomyeok byeongchiryobang* (牛馬羊猪染疫病治療方, the Veterinary Remedies for Livestock, 1541), the letter excavated from Yi Eungtae's grave (1586), and King Seonjo's *Gukmun Yuseo* (1593) will be introduced here.

Compiled by a famous interpreter of the time, Choe Sejin (1468~1542), *Hunmongjahoe* is a teaching materials for children to master Chinese. It explains the definitions and sounds of 3,360 core Chinese characters, and a discussion of the names of Hangeul letters (consonants and vowels) is included in its commentary section. *Hunminjeongeum haerye* talks about its usage and the sounds of Hangeul consonants and vowels but does not mention the names of Hangeul letters. In contrast, this book indicates the name of ‘ㄱ’ as ‘Giyeok’ by writing down commentary in Chinese characters ‘其役’ (Korean pronunciation of 其役 is [kiyək]). After going through slight adjustments, the names of Hangeul letters revealed

in this book have come to be used in the present day.

A book on learning Chinese, particularly Chinese conversation, *Beonyeokbaktongsa* was also compiled by Choe Sejin. The original Chinese was translated into Hangeul, and the Chinese sounds were transcribed in Hangeul. This book is of paramount importance for studying Korean in that period, and the Chinese phonetics recorded in the book are also valuable for the study of Chinese phonetic history.

*Wumayangjeoyeomyeokbyeongchiryobang* is a single volume book that introduces cures for contagious diseases in cows, horses, sheep, and pigs. The king commissioned the publication of this book after an outbreak of contagious disease among cows started from Pyeongan-do in the spring of 1541 and began spreading to other parts of the country and to sheep and pigs. As mentioned, medical documents that deal with treatments for human diseases have been translated into Hangeul steadily since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. However, the emergence of a translated book that covers treatments for veterinary diseases shows that the topics of translated books were diversifying, covering practical aspects of people's lives.

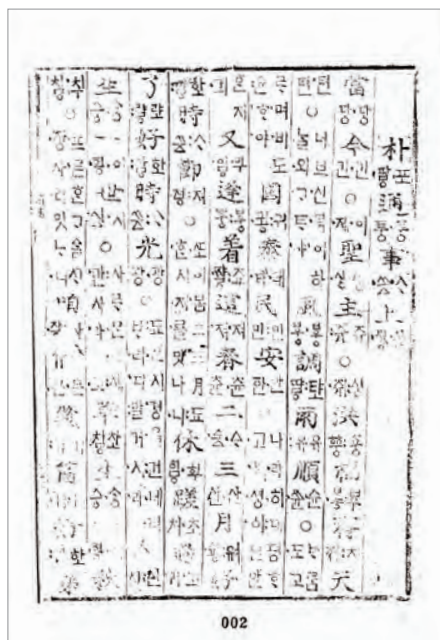
The previously-examined books were written in Chinese and translated into Hangeul while the letter excavated from Yi Eungtae's grave and King Seonjo's



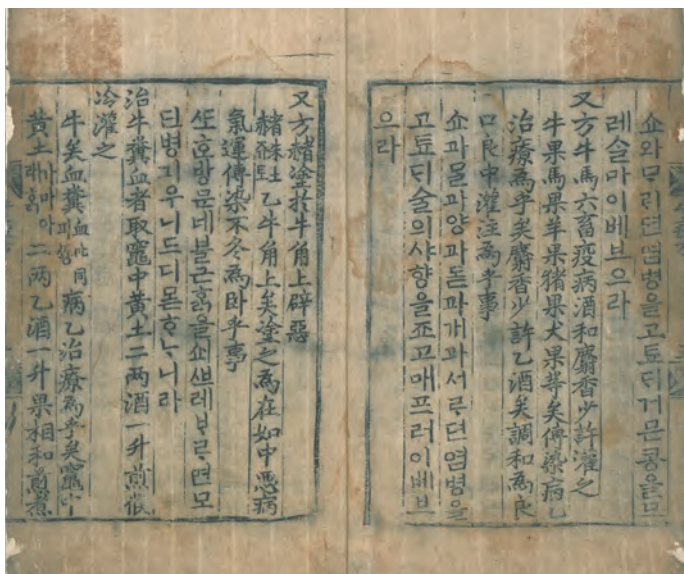
〈Figure 18〉 Hunmongjahoe



〈Figure 19〉 Hunmongjahoe's commentary section



〈Figure 20〉 Beonyekbaktongsa



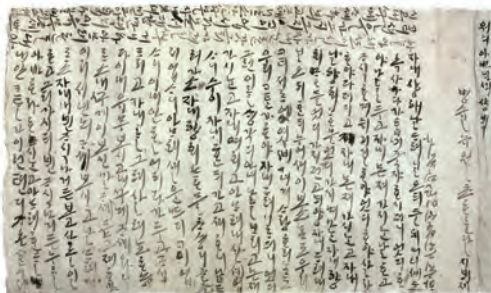
〈Figure 21〉 Wumayangjeoyeomyeokbyeongchiryobang



*Gukmun Yuseo* were originally written in Hangeul. The letter excavated from Yi Eungtae's grave, written in 1586, validates the assumption that Hangeul was widely used among ordinary people. It is a love letter written in Hangeul by a widow addressed to her late husband that was buried in his tomb. King Seonjo's *Gukmun Yuseo* was a conciliatory letter written by Joseon's 14<sup>th</sup> king Seonjo (r. 1567~1608) in order to win back the hearts of Joseon people captured in Imjinwaeran (the Korean-Japanese war during 1592~1598) as prisoners of war by the Japanese. This letter is significant because the king's official commands to his subjects were recorded in Hangeul.

Books with topics similar to the prior period such as medicine, religion and foreign languages, were continuously published in Hangeul in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Military and culinary themes were newly introduced in the publications and writings of this period, such as *Yeonbyeongjinam* (練兵指南, 1612), *Cheophaesineo* (捷解新語, 1676), *Eumsikdimibang* (circa 1670), and *Sukmyeongsinhancheop* (淑明宸翰帖, end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century).

*Yeonbyeongjinam* is a book about how to train soldiers published in Hamheung of Hamgyeong-do. After the publication of this book, military books were published regularly, though not with great variety. *Cheophaesineo*



〈Figure 22〉 The Letter Excavated from Yi Eungtae's Grave



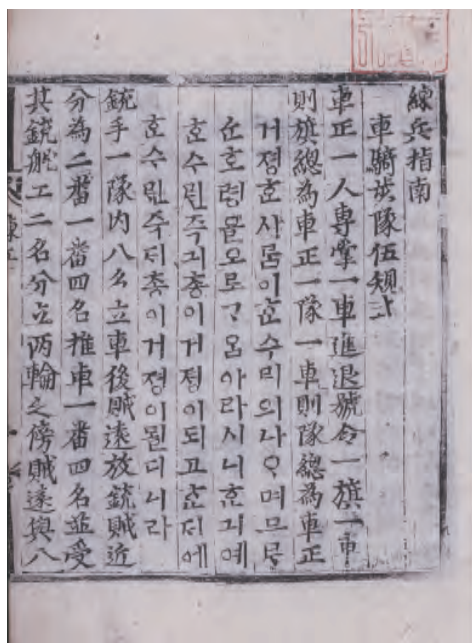
〈Figure 23〉 King Seonjo's Gukmun Yuseo

is a textbook for learning the Japanese language in question and answer format. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, only textbooks for learning Chinese were translated into Hangeul as *Beonyeoknogeoldae* and *Beonyeokbaktongsa*. The publication of a textbook for learning the Japanese language in this period suggests that foreign languages learned by Korean were gradually diversified.

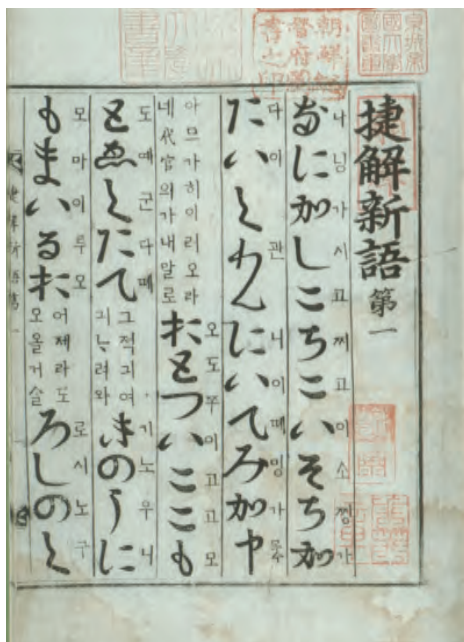
*Eumsikdimibang* is a cookbook written in Hangeul around 1670 by Mrs. Jang (1598~1680), a wife of Yi Simyeong who lived in the Andong and Yeongyang areas of Gyeongsang-do. It is the very first cookbook written in Hangeul and includes total of 146 recipes. It is reputed to be the oldest culinary publication in East Asia.

*Sukmyeongsinhancheop* is a compilation of letters written in Hangeul. Princess Sukmyeong (1640~1699), the daughter of the 17<sup>th</sup> king of Joseon, Hyojong (r. 1649~1659) collected 67 letters she received from her family members, including her father, mother, brother, sister-in-law and grandmother. This collection is not from common people but members of the royal family. Even her father and brother wrote to her in Hangeul: this shows that Hangeul usage was not limited to just commoners or women.

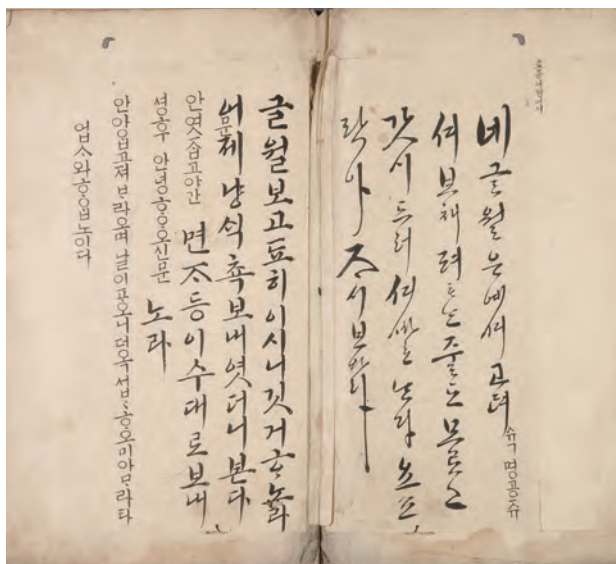
In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, more books with diverse topics were published than in any other period. Books with



〈Figure 24〉 Yeonbyeongjinam



〈Figure 25〉 Cheophaesineo

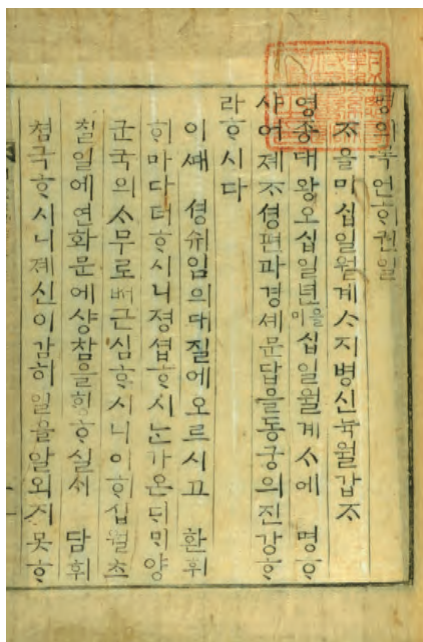


〈Figure 26〉 Sukmyeongsinhancheop

familiar topics were still in publication, as well as textbooks of the Manchurian and Mongolian languages. Among the abundant documents of this period, *Myeongeuirokeonhae* (1777), *Yugyeonggimininyuneum* (1783), and a Contract Deed for Dealing in Farmland (1794) will be introduced here.

*Myeongeuirokeonhae* is a translated version of *Myeongeuirok*, which was originally published in Chinese characters in 1777. This book is solely in Hangeul and does not include a single Chinese character, showing the new trend in this period. The eldest grandson of the 21<sup>st</sup> king of Joseon, Yeongjo (r. 1724~1776), who would become the 22<sup>nd</sup> king of Joseon, Jeongjo (r. 1776~1800), ruled the country instead of his grandfather. At this time there were a few people against this mandatory rule. The book records the treason committed by them and describes the process and details of their punishments and officials' opinions on the incident.

*Yugyeonggimininyuneum*, is a document of a royal mandate. King Jeongjo proclaimed a royal mandate on his birthday for the people of Gyeonggi-do, who had been suffering from two consecutive years of bad crops. ; He offered to help by lending them rice and exempting them from military rice taxes. The beginning of the document is written in Chinese characters, and the last part is in



〈Figure 27〉 Myeongeuirocheonhae



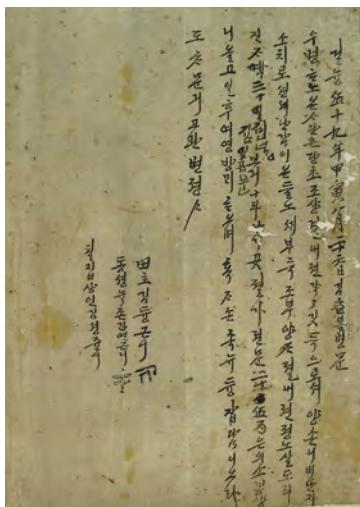
Hangeul. Just like *Myeongeuirokeonhae*, the translated part is solely in Hangeul.

A Contract Deed for Dealing in Farmland shown in <Figure 29> is a document that records the event of landowner Gim Junggeun selling his farmland to Gim Chungeun in 1794. The existence of a document written solely in Hangeul, used in a legally binding activity like buying and selling land, illustrates the fact that Hangeul was used in public affairs as well as a private.

After the 19<sup>th</sup> century, books with diverse topics were published by people from different backgrounds. New kind of publications from this period included Korean grammar books, dictionaries and the Bible translated by missionaries. These were intensively published from the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century to the beginning of the twentieth. Modern newspapers and novels were published and read popularly in this period as well. However, the most important post-19<sup>th</sup> century development may be the establishment of the concept of ‘state’ and ‘nation’ which resulted in the subsequent adoption of the concept of ‘native script’. The birth of the name ‘Hangeul’ discussed in Chapter 4.1, the Korean orthography establishment process elaborated in Chapter 5.2, and the script reform dealt with in Chapter 5.3, all emerged in this period.



〈Figure 28〉 Yugeonggimininyuneum



〈Figure 29〉 A Contract Deed for Dealing in Farmland written in Hangeul

## 5.2 Establishment of Korean Orthography

*Huminjeongeum haerye* published in 1446 explain the new script and its usage after the invention of Hunminjeoneum. Therefore, *Hunminjeongeum haerye* can be seen as the first Hunminjeongeum or Hangeul writing convention. There were no other rules on Hangeul established until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Instead, Hangeul writing conventions had been evolving naturally according to the changes in Korean. This is related to the fact that Hangeul is a phonetic alphabet with separate consonant letters representing consonant sounds and vowel letters representing vowel sounds.

The establishment of a convention for script that denotes spoken language is closely related to the development of the concept of a national state. This was the same in Korea, where Koreans began to recognize the need for the establishment of a writing convention towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. An article in Volume 46 of *Gojongsillok*, recorded on July 9, 1905 includes an entry by Ji Seokyeong who suggests, ‘Gukmun (national script) to be organized and taught in more convenient way’. The article recorded a few days later, on July 19, states that Gukmun was reformed as Ji Seokyeong suggested, and *Sinjeong Gukmun* (新訂國文) was announced. However, Ji Seokyeong’s *Sinjeong Gukmun* was to be

entangled in endless controversies. On July 8, 1907, the government set up Gukmun Yeonguso (Research Institute of the National Script) within, Academic Department of the Government that would become the focal point for discussions on research, current usage and future developmental prospects of Hangeul. In December of 1909, eight researchers of Gukmun Yeonguso presented a report on the current issues regarding Gukmun called Gukmun Yeongu Euijeongan (國文研究議定案). However, since the Great Korean Empire met its demise in 1910, the government was not able to function as a governing body, and Gukmun Yeongu Euijeongan – which could have served as the foundation for modern Korean writing standards – was not able to be adopted.

During the Japanese Occupation, the Government-General of Korea restarted the standardization of the Hangeul writing convention. The Government-General announced the Korean Spelling System for Elementary Education called Botonghakgyoyong Eonmun Cheoljabeop (普通學校用 諺文綴字法) in April of 1912, but it was extremely simple and included numerous parts that did not fit the reality of the Korean language at the time. The Government-General reissued the outline of the Korean Spelling System for Elementary Education called Botonghakgyoyong Eonmun Cheoljabeop Daeyo (普通學

校用 諺文綴字法 大要) in March of 1921, and in February of 1930, published the Korean Spelling System called Eonmun Cheoljabeop (諺文綴字法).

It is also significant that not only Japanese, but also many Korean scholars were involved in the three-phase Hangeul writing system standardization attempts led by the Government-General. That is why the first orthographic rule announced in 1912 preferred phonetic spelling, while the last system published in 1930 evolved into a morphophonemic system similar to the present day. This is due to the Korean scholars' insistence that the Hangeul tradition of representing morphophonemic forms had to be reflected.

The role Joseoneo Hakhoe (Korean Language Research Society) played in relation to this process must also be noted.<sup>16</sup> This society led the Hangeul movement and worked hard to standardize the Korean orthography. In the general assembly held on December 13, 1930, Joseoneo Hakhoe members agreed to establish the Standardized Hangeul Writing System called Hangeul Machumbeop Tongilan, and composed the first draft in December 1932. They deliberated and corrected the original draft to reach the final version, and announced it on October 29, 1933.

The current Korean orthography in use in Korea was revised in 1988 based on the Hangeul Machumbeop

Tongilan announced by Joseneo Hakhoe in 1933.

## APPENDIX

### **Korean Romanization**

The romanization of Korean was initiated by Westerners attempting to transcribe Korean using Latin alphabets. Several romanization systems have been suggested since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and the following three systems are most widely used currently: (1) McCune-Reischauer Romanization (2) Yale Romanization (3) Romanization of Korean.

The McCune-Reischauer Romanization was suggested in a paper written by G. M. McCune and E.O. Reischauer in 1939, titled “The Romanization of the Korean Language: based upon its phonetic structure (*Transactions of the Korean Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* Vol. XXIX, Seoul).” They clearly state the purpose of this paper: “We have devised our Romanization with the purpose of providing a comprehensible guide to the standard modern pronunciation of Korean for those unfamiliar with the language, as well as for those who know it” (McCune & Reischauer 1939: 8). Due to this intention, diacritic marks and phonetic distinctions which is not phonemes in Korean

were added to this romanization.

However, S. E. Martin suggested these were problematic and devised the Yale Romanization. Martin (1968: 87) describes the background behind his invention: “As a result of dissatisfaction with existing systems, I began devising what I call the Yale System, and the first version of this was used in my monograph *Korean morphophonemics* (1954). ... and the modified form is the one used in this study and also throughout the *Korean Reference Grammar*.” He criticizes the McCune-Reischauer Romanization on the same page: “the principal drawbacks are the phonemically unnecessary diacritic marks (ǒ, ŭ, apostrophe for aspiration) and the phonemically unnecessary distinctions of b:p, t:d, k:g, r:l etc.” At the same time he called his Yale Romanization “the regular representation of the phonemes” (Ibid, p. 89).

The priority for the McCune-Reischauer Romanization is on actual Korean pronunciation, whereas the Yale Romanization devised by S.E. Martin emphasizes the importance of the morphophonemic structure of words. This feature of the Yale Romanization is the reason why the linguists prefer the Yale Romanization.

The Romanization of Korean was revised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Korea in 2000. This

system is closer to the McCune-Reischauer Romanization than the Yale Romanization, since it stresses the importance of actual pronunciation. But unlike the McCune-Reischauer Romanization, this system eliminated various diacritic marks. Currently, this system is applied to all books, signs and instructions published in Korea.

The following tables show the comparison of the McCune-Reischauer Romanization (MR) and the Yale Romanization (YR) that Martin (1968: 88) indicated plus the current Romanization of Korean (ROK).



	MR	YR	ROK
ㅏ	a	a	a
ㅑ	ō	e	eo
ㅓ	o	o	o
ㅕ	u	wu	u
ㅡ	ũ	u	eu
ㅣ	i	i	i
ㅗ	ae	ay	ae
ㅛ	e	ey	e
ㅜ	oe	oy	oe
ㅠ	wi	wi	wi
ㅙ	ya	ya	ya
ㅚ	yō	ye	yeo
ㅜ	yo	yo	yo
ㅠ	yu	yu	yu
ㅞ	yae	yay	yae
ㅟ	ye	yey	ye
ㅠ	wa	wa	wa
ㅡ	wae	way	wae
ㅢ	wō	we	wo
ㅣ	we	wey	we
ㅤ	ūi	uy	ui

〈The Comparison of Korean Vowel Romanization Systems〉

	MR	YR	ROK
ㄱ	k, g	k	g, k
ㄲ	kk	kk	kk
ㅋ	k'	kh	k
ㄷ	t, d	t	d, t
ㄸ	tt	tt	tt
ㅌ	t'	th	t
ㅍ	p, b	p	b, p
ㅑ	pp	pp	pp
ㅓ	p'	ph	p
ㅕ	ch, j	c	j
ㅖ	tch	cc	jj
ㅗ	ch'	ch	ch
ㅛ	s	s	s
ㅜ	ss	ss	ss
ㅎ	h	h	h
ㄴ	n	n	n
ㄹ	m	m	m
ㅇ	ng	ng	ng
ㄹ	l, r	l	r, l

〈The Comparison of Korean Consonant Romanization Systems〉

### 5.3 The Script Reform:

#### Mixed Script to Hangeul-only Script

Since the invention of Hunminjeongeum, Hangeul has been used in diverse contexts, yet Hangeul has always been used along with Chinese characters, Hanja. In Chapter 5.1, books and documents published in Hangeul were examined, and it is true that there are more materials written concurrently in Hangeul and Hanja than Hangeul-only materials. The change in this convention began towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century as the consciousness of Gukmun (national scripts) spread. As discussed in Chapter 4.1, King Gojong commanded Gukmun to be the foundation and for Chinese characters' translation to be added as an option, or for a mixture of Hangeul and Hanja to be used. The motivation behind this command was the movement for the “unification of the written and spoken language.”

Yu Giljun's *Seoyugyeonmun* (西遊見聞) is usually considered as the first publication to use the Hangeul-Hanja mixed script. Published in 1895, the book is a type of travel log: he introduced the civilizations new to him and recorded his impression of them as he traveled Europe and the United States. He used Hangeul-Hanja mixed script in this book by using Hanja for Chinese words and recording the rest in Hangeul. This style of Hangeul-

Hanja mixed script can be also seen in *Yongbieoecheonga*, published in 1447. In a broader sense, the Hangeul-Hanja mixture script first used by Yu Giljun was based on the tradition from long ago.

*Dongnip sinmun* (The Independent) is the most famous publication known to be written solely in Hangeul at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was the first modern newspaper published in Korea, launched to foster an independent spirit in Korean people. In their inaugural statement, the founders clearly declared that the purpose of publishing the newspaper solely in Hangeul was for the enlightenment of people. However, the Hangeul-only style script rested on a tradition handed down from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Just like Hangeul-Hanja mixed script, materials written solely in Hangeul were already discussed in Chapter 5.1, even though they were not as common as the publications using Hangeul and Hanja concurrently.

The national identity of Joseon and the recognition of Gukmun were shaped towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Naturally, the concurrent use of Hangeul and Hanja emerged as an issue, but both Hangeul-Hanja mixed script and Hangeul-only script had been ingrained in the Korean transcription tradition from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Hangeul-Hanja mixed

# 西遊見聞第一編

杞溪俞吉潁輯述

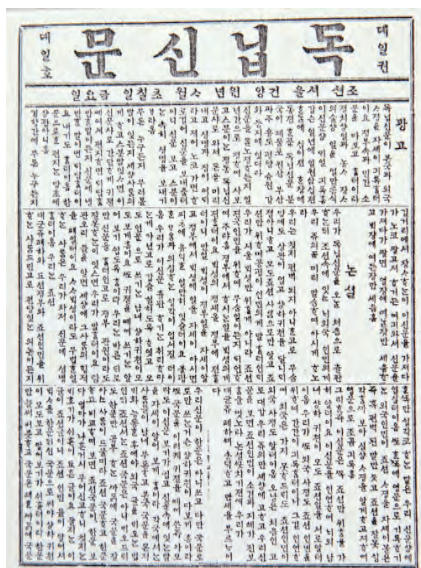
## 地球世界의 榮論

地球이 吾人의 住居인 故 世界이 亦 遊星의 一이 라 今 其 遊星 數를 數하야 一曰 水星 二曰 金星 三曰 地球 星四曰 火星 五曰 木星 六曰 土星 七曰 天王星 八曰 海王星 이 此 八星 數 遊星이라 謂하야 此 者 其 體가 運動하야 諸 他 恒星의 定居 定着 得不 同 定 然 故 又 一 百 三十 小星이 有하야 諸 遊星 數 總行하야 故 眾 恒星이라 名하야 彼 太陽 光 影의 射 照하야 者 卽 吾人 地球의 一 體星이라 地球의 太陽의 距離 從 星은 色 遊星 數 總行하야 且 諸 星은 色 太陽 數 總行하야 又 諸 遊星이 有하야 亦 太陽 數 總行하야 此 理 合 稱 定 引 太陽의 軌道 時 太陽이 亦 恒星의 一이 故 眾 虛空에 點 綴 定 多少 恒星이 亦 皆 遊星 數 總 星 數 總 星 數 總 太陽이 以 吾人의 太陽 及 諸 遊星의 大小 其 太陽의 距離 總 記하야 列하야

直徑의 長

太陽의 距離

〈Figure 30〉 Seoyugyeonmun



〈Figure 31〉 Dongnip Sinmun

script and Hangeul-only script were used in various ways depending on the genre or medium. Hangeul-only script was preferred in popular genre like novels. In more professional writing such as newspapers, Hangeul-Hanja mixed script was preferred, except in a few special cases. This trend was maintained for a relatively long time. After 1945, Hangeul writing systems took different path in South Korea and North Korea. Hanja was abolished in North Korea in 1949 and is no longer used. In South Korea, it was conventional to use Hangeul-Hanja mixed script in publications such as newspapers, academic papers, various statutes and official announcements until the 1980s. Hangeul-only script reappeared in newspapers for the first time in 1988 when *The Hangeore* was launched. Through the 1990s, the use of Hangeul-only script steadily diffused, and now Hangeul-only script has become the norm. When Hanja and Hangeul are used concurrently, only a few people are able to decode it. As the number of people who can decode Hanja decreased, the understanding of Sino-Korean words with Hanja also dropped. As a result, those Sino-Korean words are not used as often, and even if a word has a Chinese root, its origin is not recognized in many cases. This tendency is on the rise, especially among the younger generation.





## 6. HANGEUL NOW

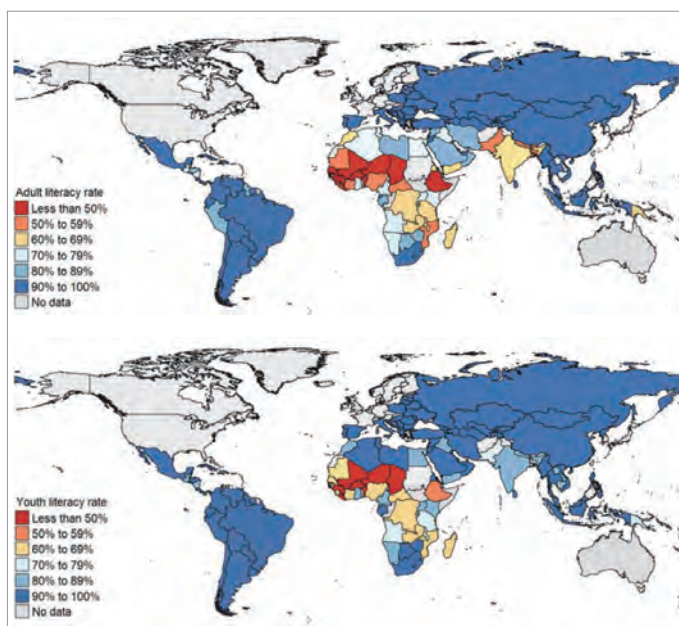
The native script of Korean language, Hangeul, has been in use since its invention in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and now it is used by anyone who speaks Korean. Because Hangeul is a phonetic alphabet with separate consonants and vowels, there are only 24 letters and the script is easy to learn. This helps lower the illiteracy rate tremendously. The National Institute of the Korean Language under Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism conducted a basic literacy survey on 12,137 adults (from age 19 to 79) in 2008, and the result indicated that 98.3% of the adults between 19 and 79 year olds were literate. According to data published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) in UIS Fact Sheet (September 2013, No. 26), the literacy rate in Korea is so high, the country is indicated as 'no data', which translates as no further investigation needed.

This may be the result of excessive education fever in Korea, but it may also be proof that the script is easy to learn. If Sejong intended Hunminjeongeum "to be learned

easily and used conveniently by people everyday,” his goal has been achieved. This line of thought extends to the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize, created in 1989. The Prize honors the outstanding contribution made by King Sejong to literacy over 500 years ago. The Prize rewards the activities of governments or governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) displaying merit and achieving effective results in the fight for literacy. It gives special consideration to the creation, development and dissemination of mother-tongue languages in developing countries.

Hangeul, an alphabet easy to learn and easy to use, along with Korean, has been gaining more fame outside Korea in recent days. On top of the improved economic power of Korea, Hangeul has been largely credited with the expansion and popularity of Korean culture, the so-called ‘Hallyu (Korean Wave)’. Korean themselves are shocked by the immense popularity of Korean dramas, movies and music worldwide.

One quantitative barometer that illustrates the increased interest in Hangeul and Korean is the number of people taking TOPIK (Test of Proficiency in Korean) administered by a Korean government institute. Since the first test in 1997, a total 27 tests have been conducted as of July, 2012. Until 2006, the tests were given annually,



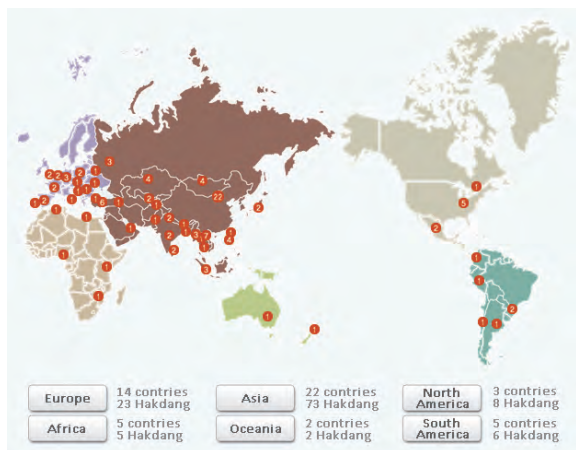
〈Figure 32〉 Global maps of literacy for adults and youth (by UNESCO)



〈Figure 33〉 Burundi's National Literacy Service was awarded the 2011 UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize (by UNESCO)

but since 2010 four tests are administered per year. As of 2012, the tests are conducted in 178 areas of 53 countries. The number of people who took the first test was 2,274; for the 20<sup>th</sup> test conducted in 2010, the number surged to 11,795 according to the data collected from 1997 to 2010. As more people take an interest in learning Korean and Hangeul, as well as knowing more about Korean culture and history, Korean studies courses offered in colleges abroad are increasing. Institutions that teach Korean and introduce Korean culture like the Sejong Hakdang (King Sejong Institute) and the Sejong Gyosil (King Sejong Class) are increasing in number. Up to 2010, there were only 22 branches of Sejong Hakdang and Sejong Gyosil in operation, but as of 2012, they have branched out to number 16 in 10 European countries, 56 in 19 Asian countries, seven in three North American countries, four in four African countries, five in five South American countries, and two in two Oceanic countries.

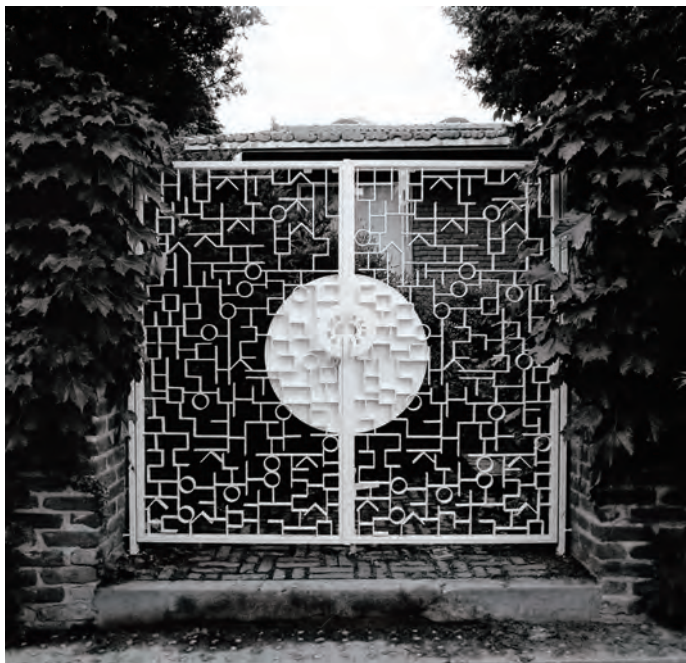
Since the interest in Hangeul and Korean has exploded in the past few years, many Korean text books in foreign languages other than English are being published, and the quality has increased as well. Numerous books devoted to explaining Korean phonology and grammar written in languages besides Korean are published, and more widespread research on Korean seems to be ensuing in



<Figure 34> Global map of King Sejong Hangeul (by King Sejong Hangeul)

academia.

One other noteworthy development is that some Koreans have begun noticing the structural beauty of Hangeul more, breaking away from viewing it simply as the letter transcription of Korean. In the past, Korean fonts that can be utilized on computer keyboards were fairly limited, but now, diverse forms of Hangeul fonts are in development, and art works using Hangeul as a motif are on the rise. These phenomena can be interpreted as showing that Hangeul has the potential to be utilized as a communication tool in other media.

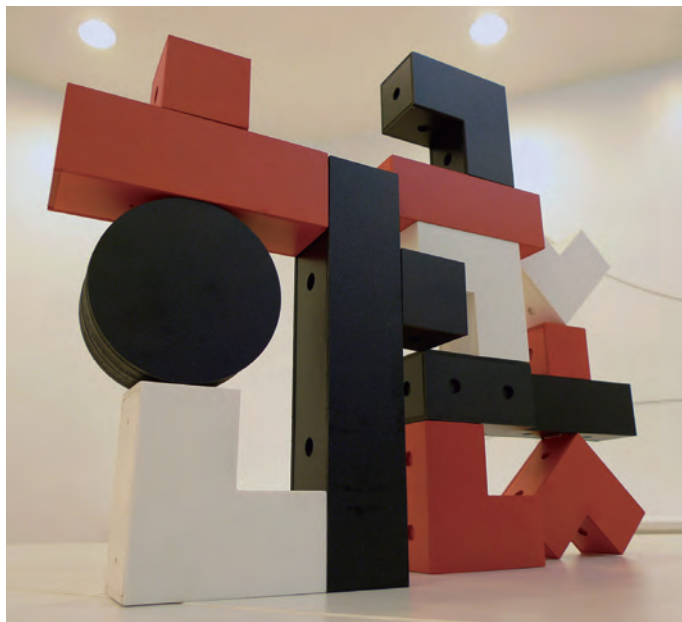


〈Figure 35〉 Ahn sang-soo's Front Gate



〈Figure 36〉 Designer Lie Sang bong's Work





〈Figure 37〉 Hangeul Educational Robot

## ENDNOTE

1 <Table 1> has been arranged mainly based on the official or standard languages that are used in Korea, China and Japan. It is well known that there are minority languages spoken in China and Japan, unlike in Korea. Korea refers to both South and North Korea in <Table 1>. South Korea and North Korea are two different countries politically, yet they use identical language and writing systems, Korean and Hangeul.

2 More detailed information regarding these languages is available at the website of the World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS), <http://wals.info/> and Ethnologue: Languages of the World's website, <http://www.ethnologue.com/web.asp>.

3 More detailed linguistic features of Korean, Mandarin and Japanese can be found in WALS, which explains the main characteristics of world languages. WALS introduces 149 features in 10 areas for Korean, 153 features in nine areas for Chinese, and 151 features in 10 areas for Japanese.

4 Korean consonants have a distinctive feature: as the sound becomes stronger, more strokes are added. This is rooted in the principle of gahoeok, or 'adding strokes' to basic characters to create new consonants, which originates from the invention of Hunminjeongeum. For example, when one stroke is added to 'ㄱ[k]', 'ㅋ[k<sup>h</sup>]' is created, and if one stroke is added to 'ㄷ[t]', 'ㅌ[t<sup>h</sup>]' is created. Hangeul is classified as a featural writing system when this specific characteristic of its consonants is highlighted. Refer to Appendix 2 of Section 3.2 for more details on featural writing systems and Hangeul.

5 Joseon is usually considered to have existed between 1392 and 1910. Nonetheless, the 26<sup>th</sup> king of Joseon, King Gojong (r. 1863~1907), renamed Joseon to Daehanjuguk (The Great Korean Empire) on October 12, 1897 and crowned himself the Emperor. Daehanjuguk lasted from 1897 to 1910. Therefore, here the duration of Joseon is indicated from 1392 to 1897.

6 Originally written in Hanja, this preamble was translated into Hunminjeongeum and posted at the beginning of *Worinseokbo* (Moon's Reflection on the Buddha's Genealogy, 1459). In the original, as shown in <Figure 7>, Hanja sounds, pitch-accent diacritics, the original Chinese text, and annotations are all present. Only the preface written by King Sejong is quoted here.

나랏 말씨미 中國에 달아 文字와로 서르 스몓디 아니홀씨 이런 전쥬로 어린 百姓이 니르  
고져 흥 배 이셔도 무츨내 제 쓰들 시러 퍼디 몬흥 노미 하니라 내 이물 爲흥야 어엿미 너  
겨 새로 스물여들 字를 땡고노니 사롭마다 힌이 수비 니겨 날로 뿌메 便安키 호고져 흥 쓰  
르미니라

7 Joseon was using the Lunar Calendar at the time; thus Lunar December 30, 1443 can be converted into January 23, 1444.

8 Translation adapted Ledyard (1966: 229).

9 Translation adapted Lee Iksop and Ramsey (2000: 37).

10 For further explanation on wholly muddy, refer to annotation 6 of Lee Ki-Moon & Ramsey (2011: 129).

11 This method is called *gakja byeongseo* (Horizontal Doubling Combination of Same Consonants); refer to Section 3.4 for details

12 The following translation regarding the explanation of vowels is from Lee Ki-Moon & Ramsey (2011: 120).

13 Translation from Lee Ki-Moon & Ramsey (2011: 122).

14 The name change process for the script invented by King Sejong from Hunminjeongeum to Hangeul was explained in Chapter 4.1. Hunminjeongeum and Hangeul both refer to the same script created by King Sejong. From Chapter Five, the name Hangeul has been used, even if the period discussed did not use that name, in order to promote better understanding.

15 More books published in Hangeul can be found in Lee Ki-Moon & Ramsey (2011).

16 This society changed its name to Hangeul Hakhoe (Hangeul Research Society) later.

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The National Institute of the Korean Language: [http://www.korean.go.kr/09\\_new/index.jsp](http://www.korean.go.kr/09_new/index.jsp)

Digital Hangeul Museum: <http://www.hangeulmuseum.org/>

Sejong Hakdang: [http://www.sejonghakdang.org/nuri/sjc/SJC\\_Main](http://www.sejonghakdang.org/nuri/sjc/SJC_Main)

WALS (The World Atlas of Language Structure): <http://wals.info/>

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## GLOSSARY

Eonmuncheong (諺文廳)	The Vernacular Script Commission
Gangyeongdogam (刊經都監)	The General Directorate for the Publishing of Sutra
Gukmun Yeonguso (國文研究所)	Research Institute of National Scripts
Hangeulmo (한글모)	Hangeul Society
Jeongeumcheong (正音廳)	The Proper Sounds Commission
Jiphyeonjeon (集賢殿)	The Academy of Worthies
Joseon Eonmun Societ (朝鮮諺文會)	Korean Vernacular Script Research Society
Joseoneo Hakhoe (朝鮮語學會)	Korean Language Research Society
Sejong Gyosil (世宗教室)	King Sejong Class
Sejong Hakdang (世宗學堂)	King Sejong Institute
Byeongseo (竝書)	Horizontal Combination
Chajapyogi (借字表記)	Borrowing Chinese characters transcription
Eonmun (諺文)	The Vernacular Script
Gakja Byeongseo (各字竝書)	Horizontal Doubling Combination

Gugyeol (口訣)	One of borrowing Chinese characters transcriptions
Gukeo (國語)	National language
Gukmun (國文)	National script
Hangeul (한글)	The native Korean writing system, literally Great Scripts or One Scripts
Hanja (漢字)	Chinses characters
Hapyong Byeongseo (合用並書)	Horizontal Combination of Different Letters
Hunminjeongeum (訓民正音)	Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People
Hyangchal (鄉札)	One of borrowing Chinese characters transcriptions
Hyangga (鄉歌)	The vernacular poetries of the Shilla period
Idu (吏讀)	One of borrowing Chinese characters transcriptions
Imjinwaeran (壬辰倭亂)	The Korean-Japanese war during 1592~1598
Jeongeum (正音)	Proper Sounds
Samjae (三才)	Three Powers, namely Heaven, Earth, and Man.
Yeonseo (連書)	Vertical Combination
Beonyekbaktongsa (翻譯朴通事)	The Translated Baktongsa

<i>Beonyeoknogeoldae</i> (翻譯老乞大)	The Translated Nogeoldae
<i>Beonyeoksohak</i> (翻譯小學)	The Translated Lesser Learning
Botonghakgyoyong Eonmun Cheoljabeop (普通學校用 諺文綴字法)	The Korean Spelling System for Elementary Education
Botonghakgyoyong Eonmun Cheoljabeop Daeyo (普通學校用 諺文綴字法 大要)	The outline of Korean Spelling System for Elementary Education called
<i>Bunryudugongbusieonhae</i> (分類杜工部詩諺解)	A book of translated poems of Tu Fu (Dobu in Korean)
<i>Cheophaesineo</i> (捷解新語)	A book for quickly learning Japanese conversation
Choseonghae (初聲解)	Explanation of Initial Sounds
<i>Daehakeonhae</i> (大學諺解)	The Translated Great Learning
<i>Dongnip sinmun</i> (獨立新聞)	The Independent
Eonmun Chuljabeop (諺文綴字法)	The Korean Spelling System
<i>Eumsikdimibang</i>	A cookbook
<i>Gojongsillok</i> (高宗實錄)	The Veritable Records of King Gojong
<i>Gugeupbangeonhae</i> (救急方諺解)	A medical reference book with first-aid techniques for various diseases and injuries
Gukmun Yeongu Euijeongan (國文研究議定安)	A report on the current issues regarding Gukmun presented by eight researchers of Gukmun Yeonguso
Haeryepyeon (解例篇)	Section of Explanations and Examples



Hangeul Machumbeop Tongilan (한글 맞춤법 統一案)	The Standardized Hangeul Writing System
<i>Hangeulmo Jukbogi</i> (한글모 족보기)	The document recording the full account of the founding general meeting of Hangeulmo
Hapjahae (合字解)	Explanation on Combining Methods of the Letters
<i>Hunminjeongeum eonhae</i> (訓民正音 諺解)	Korean Translation of Hunminjeongeum haerye
<i>Hunminjeongeum haerye</i> (訓民正音 解例)	Explanation and Examples of the Correct Sounds for the Instruction of the People
<i>Hunmongjahoe</i> (訓蒙字會)	The Teaching Materials for Mastering Chinese Characters for Children
Jejahae (制字解)	The Explanation of Letter Design
Jongseonghae (終聲解)	Explanation of Terminal Sounds
Jungseonghae (中聲解)	Explanation of Medial Sounds
<i>Jungyongeonhae</i> (中庸諺解)	The Translated Doctrine of the Mean
<i>Juyeokeonhae</i> (周易諺解)	The Translated Rites of Zhou
King Seonjo's Gukmun Yuseo (宣祖國文諭書)	A conciliatory letter written by King Seonjo
<i>Maengjaeonhae</i> (孟子諺解)	The Translated Mencius
<i>Myeongeuirok</i> (明義錄)	The book explaining the fairness of King Jeongjo's political decisions in the latter half of Joseon

<i>Myeongeuirokeonhae</i> (明義錄諺解)	The Annotation of Myeonguirok
<i>Noneoeonhae</i> (論語諺解)	The Translated Confucian Analects
<i>Odaesan Sangwonsa Jungchang Gwonseonmun</i> (五臺山 上院寺 重創 勸善文)	The Letter Calling for Donations for the Repair of Sangwon Temple in the Odae Mountains
<i>Samgangaengsildo</i> (三綱行實圖)	A compilation of worthy anecdotes about loyal subjects, filial sons and virtuous wives from Joseon and China
<i>Samyeong</i> (三經)	The Three Classics
<i>Saseo</i> (四書)	The Four Books
<i>Sejongsillok</i> (世宗實錄)	The Veritable Records of King Sejong
<i>Seogyeononhae</i> (書經諺解)	The Translated Book of Documents
<i>Seokbosangeol</i> (釋譜詳節)	Documents the family tree and life of Buddha
<i>Seongho saseol</i> (星湖僊說)	Collected Works of Seongho
<i>Seoyugyeonmun</i> (西遊見聞)	Observations on a Journey to the West
<i>Sigyeononhae</i> (詩經諺解)	The Translated Classic of Poetry
<i>Sohak</i> (小學)	The Lesser Learning
<i>Sukmyeongsinhancheop</i> (淑明宸翰帖)	The collection of 67 letters Sukmyeong gongju received from her family members
<i>The Hangeore</i> (한겨레신문)	The Hankyoreh
<i>Worincheongangjigok</i> (月印千江之曲)	Songs of the Moon's Imprint on a Thousand Rivers

<i>Worinseokbo</i> (月印釋譜)	Moon's Reflection on the Buddha's Genealogy
<i>Wumayangjeoyeomyeokchiryobang</i> (牛馬羊猪染疫病治療方)	The Veterinary Remedies for Livestock
<i>Yeonbyeongjinam</i> (練兵指南)	A guideline for military training
Yeuipyeon (例義篇)	Section of Examples and Definitions
<i>Yongbieocheonga</i> (龍飛御天歌)	The Song of the Dragons Flying Through Heaven
Yongjarye (用字例)	Examples of Word Usage
<i>Yugyeonggimininyuneum</i> (諭京畿民人綸音)	King's words or letters to the people of Gyeonggi Province
<i>Sinjeong Gukmun</i> (新訂國文)	New Edition of the National Writing

## SOURCES

Photos	Sources
Royal Portrait of King Sejong	Royal Portrait Museum / Mr. Seo Jae-sik
Hunminjeongeum haerye	Gansong Art Museum / Mr. Seo Jae-sik
Hunminjeongeum eonhae	Sogang University Loyola Library / Mr. Seo Jae-sik
The Preface of Seokbosangjeol	Sogang University Loyola Library
Hangeulmo Jukbogi	Hangeul Hakhoe / Mr. Seo Jae-sik
Yongbieocheonga	Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University
Seokbosangjeol	National Library of Korea / Mr. Seo Jae-sik
Worincheongangjigok	MiraeN
Bunryudugongbusieonhae	Gyeonggi Provincial Museum
Samgangaengsildo	Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University
Odaesan Sangwonsa Jungchang Gwonseonmun	Woljeongsa Museum
Hunmongjahoe	National Library of Korea / Mr. Seo Jae-sik
Hunmongjahoe's commentary section	Korea University Library
Beonyekbaktongsa	National Assembly Library of Korea
Wumayangyeoyemyeokbyeongchiryobang	Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University
The Letter Excavated from Yi Eungtae's Grave	Andong National University Museum
King Seonjo's Gukmun Yuseo	Busan Museum / Mr. Seo Jae-sik
Yeonbyeongjinam	National Library of Korea / Mr. Seo Jae-sik

Cheophaesineo	National Library of Korea / Mr. Seo Jae-sik
Sukmyeongsinhancheop	Cheogju National Museum
Myeongeuirokeonhae	National Library of Korea / Mr. Seo Jae-sik
Yugyeonggimininyuneum	Jangseogak at the Academy of Korean Studies
A Contract Deed for Dealing in Farmland written in Hangeul	Hangeul Museum (Mido Museum)
Seoyugyeonmun	Seoul National University Library / Mr. Seo Jae-sik
Dongnip Sinmun	Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University / Mr. Seo Jae-sik
Ahn Sang-soo's Front Gate	Graphic Designer Ahn sang-soo
Designer Lie Sang bong's Work	Yonhap News
Hangeul Educational Robot	Yonhap News

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